

FOLLOW YOUR CREATIVE PATHWAY:

Pursuing Your Next Life Mission



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“The problem about the future of innovation could be solved if we could learn to be conscious co-creators of a better global society.”

How the Idea Was Born

by Serafin Talisayon

The Future of Innovation: A Problem

Sometime in 2008, Bettina von Stamm and Anna Trifilova emailed me to request for my idea about the future of innovation. They compiled ideas from about a hundred authors and practitioners of innovation into a book, *The Future of Innovation* (<https://bit.ly/pathway-future>). I wrote something that has been brewing in my mind for years:

Mankind has demonstrated that its ability to technologically innovate is far greater than its ability to anticipate, learn and solve the negative social consequences of those innovations.

Innovation in the future will be driven by common threats confronting mankind. Ironically, most of those threats are man-made. Innovation will proceed in the general direction of preventing and resolving conflicts, governance at all levels, advancing human rights and human security, cross-border agreements in preventing and fighting crime and terrorism, eliminating social exclusions and other social ills that lead to poverty, generating consensus on environmental problems and solutions, and value creation.



Connecting the Dots

For many years, I have been a practitioner of mindfulness, reflective thinking, and self-development. Together with two similar practitioners, I set up the Center for Conscious Living Foundation, Inc. or CCLFI in 1999. The founders observed that many problems in the world stem from unworkable and obsolete mindsets. We wanted to help people become more aware and learn to manage their own mindsets. We advocated what we called **conscious living** which includes constantly observing and studying one's own life experiences and thinking patterns, and making choices towards personal and professional/organizational learning and change. Organizational learning and knowledge management became the outward specializations of CCLFI. We developed, tested and taught practices and tools for constantly re-creating ourselves.

In 2017, I saw a connection between five seemingly unrelated observations. They are observations anyone can make from one's life experiences, except for the last, which is global in scope. I decided to post five weekly questions for my friends on Facebook from September 10-October 7, 2017.

1. A pattern emerging from hundreds of answers to the personal question "What was your peak life experience, when you were most fulfilled, happy and joyful?"
2. Three final questions asked by the Being of Light after people who went through a near-death experience saw their life flash quickly before them.
3. A common pattern among hundreds of answers to the professional question "What helps your team do its job well?"
4. A person's innate talents and passions. My friend Tivo Mallillin, a technology innovator, told me that these two

personal elements are part of *ikigai*, the traditional formula of Okinawans for a long and happy life. *Ikigai* was thereafter included in Question 4.

5. The global blueprint for education in the 21st century recommended by the UNESCO Delors Commission.

We could discern a pattern from the above: we are all innately creative and we have always been expressing our creativities along four distinct creative pathways. We are — often unconsciously and without planning — creators.

A new book idea was born, collecting life practices and experiences from people on how they have been creating or innovating, which we started to call **life hacks for innovations**. Life hack contributors would have to review and reflect on their past experiences using the four creative pathways as a framework.

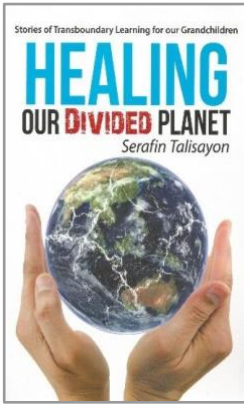
An accompanying insight flashed in my mind: the problem about the future of innovation could be solved if we could learn to be *conscious co-creators of a better global society*.

As we release this book amid the Covid-19 pandemic, we have a rare opportunity to rethink and reset our lives and thereby influence those around us towards a New Earth.

An Earlier Book

The years 2016 and 2017 were exciting for me. An insight shook and galvanized me: there is a distinct pattern and message running through decades of personal and professional experiences in my life. I had to write it down and share it. This became a book published by Balboa

Press on October 5, 2017: *Healing our Divided Planet: Stories of Transboundary Learning for Our Grandchildren* (<https://bit.ly/pathway-healing>).



Writing the book was a very exciting process for me because many seemingly random little events — a friend mentioning something, an article in the morning newspaper, an idea from a dream, a YouTube video, a new idea that popped in my mind in the middle of the day — were helping me write or rewrite the book. I said “rewrite” because I had a dream in which I was told to correct what I just wrote. Evaluating that dream, I decided to follow it and rewrote a text in the book draft.

These pop-ins and 5 a.m. dreams had become — strange as they may sound — good sources of ideas for my work. I have learned to trust my 5 a.m. dreams because my conscious mind is still not active during the wee hours of the morning. It cannot yet analyze, rationalize, expand, or embellish the ideas that emerge. They were not ordinary dreams. They could simply be a stream of ideas without visually experienced events. The more surprised my conscious mind was about a 5 a.m. dream, the more I believed it came from somewhere else other than my conscious mind. The experience was affirming and rewarding. I felt like I had many invisible co-authors who helped me write the book.

The book consisted of stories. A few stories ended with a recommended action for the reader.

The book caught the attention of the alumni of the Asian Social Institute’s doctoral program on Applied Cosmic Anthropology. The Institute is well known in Asia as an advocate, practitioner and

educational institution for social work. The doctoral program is grounded on the principle that facilitators of social change must first become practitioners of reflective personal change.

Inspired after reading the book, the alumni group invited me in April 2019 for a group experiential workshop about healing our Planet Earth. Their kind initiative also inspired and motivated me.



A Second Book: This Book

Around October 2017, after the Facebook posts, I saw a formula that could help people — anyone interested to make a difference for themselves and for others — to take personal action and become conscious co-creators of a better world. I had to write a second book. Then boom! I had another 5 a.m. dream that told me, “There should be many co-authors in this book.”

Accordingly, I constructed a co-authoring website called “Life Hacks for Innovations” where about two dozen friends and colleagues around the world put together their life experiences along the four creative pathways, between November 2017 and April 2018.

The website consisted of an introductory set of five *conversations* covering the five questions posted on Facebook.^[1] It was followed by four parallel sets of seven conversations, each set corresponding to the four creative pathways. The end result of engaging in Conversations 1 to 5 was to identify one’s creative pathways and next life missions. In Conversations 6 to 12, collaborators contributed their life experiences or life hacks in pursuing the four creative pathways. This book covers only Conversations 1 to 5.

2018 was a busy year when I had to travel and live in Hanoi, Vietnam for weeks at a time to work on a knowledge management project. In a second batch and using a second website, another dozen or so friends agreed to collaborate between August 2018 and February 2019. Finally, eight volunteers — Daan Boom, Wangu Mwangi, Ketema Kebebew Garede, Manny Manuel III, Lloyd Bautista, Tivo

[1] The term “conversation” was suggested by CCLFI Managing Director Babes Afable to describe the process of individually answering each question and collectively reflecting on the answers.

Mallillin, Ronald Camit, and myself — organized into five teams and started actual writing work in April 2019 based on the contributions from collaborators in the two “Life Hacks for Innovations” batches. This book is the product of the sharing and efforts from forty collaborators from Kenya, Ethiopia, Philippines, United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Vietnam, Mexico, Indonesia, Netherlands and Brazil.

How to Use This Book

In many ways, this is a unique book.

First, you Dear Reader are also a co-author. The book will ask you to recall and reflect on your life, then share your life experiences and life practices in an online conversation with others. After that, you can choose to become a Reader-Author by joining the next online conversation and contributing to the next version of the book. You will receive instructions on how to sign up for the online conversation at the end of the book.

Second, this book will not teach or preach an idea or theory. It merely provides a framework with five questions to ask yourself. As Reader-Author, you will draw from your own life experience and draw your life hacks to share in the online conversation. Through time, the experiential data from co-authors will grow richer as more Reader-Authors join the conversations.

Third, this book is about two seemingly opposite things: self-reflection and practical action. Life hacks are actionable tips and practices that can be applied and tested in daily life. Many of us have devised our own life hacks but it takes recall and self-reflection to bring them out clearly to our conscious attention. Writing and having conversations about them will make these clearer in your own mind.

To prepare for the conversations, please go through the following references:

- Read the “6 Essential Human Skills that Will Differentiate You in Today’s Tech-Driven Workplace” by Betty Ziegler on Linked In. The six essential skills are: critical thinking, influencing others, team collaboration, empathy, storytelling/communication, and learning how to learn.^[2] Full article: <https://bit.ly/pathway-6skills>
- Watch this video on self-awareness by Tasha Eurich. Researchers found that the basic skill underlying communication, influence, and collaboration is self-awareness. She describes three simple daily practices for enhancing one’s self-awareness.^[3] Link: <https://youtu.be/qH9Dcs6-rs4>



Ready? Please get a notebook and pen and turn the page.

^[2] This article was brought into the conversations by Daan Boom, who noted that our pathways coincided with the essential skills.

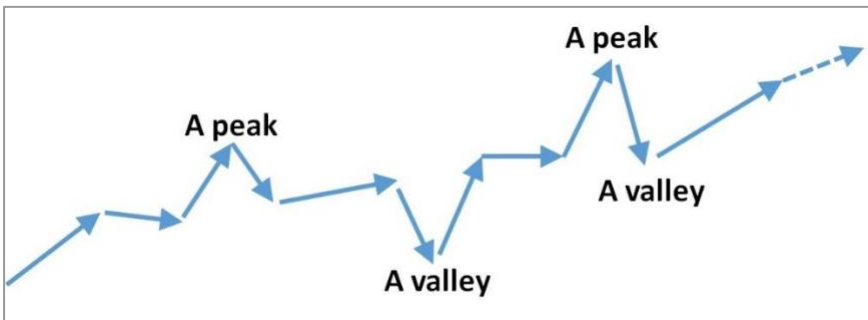
^[3] Video was shared by Rommel Ancheta.

Question One: Discover Your Creative Pathway

Choose a quiet place where you can sit down and reflect. Perhaps drink your favorite relaxing drink. Look at the sky or close your eyes. Breathe slowly. Quiet your mind, your emotions, and your body.

Now review your life's many peaks and valleys, the ups and downs. A **peak life experience** is a moment or event in your life when you felt great joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment.

Figure 1.1: Our lives have ups and downs



Now answer **Question One**: What is your peak life experience?

Recall the events and emotions of that shining moment and write about it in your notebook. If you chose two or more peaks in your life, that is fine too. Please describe each one separately.

After you are done, proceed to the next page.

Our Four Creative Pathways

CCLFI has asked Question One to hundreds of participants around the world in several of its workshops and online training sessions. The answers always fall along four distinctive categories: Re-creating, Creating, Pro-creating, and Co-creating (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: We follow one or more of these Four Creative Pathways

RE-CREATING Yourself Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduating from college• Passing the Board Exam• Climbing to the summit of Mount Pulag• Finishing in triathlon• Getting my Six Sigma black belt• Surviving cancer• My first travel abroad	CREATING Something Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assembling my first working robot• Harvesting from my vegetable garden• Writing poems• My photo in Instagram getting 500 likes• Playing the piano in family gatherings
PRO-CREATING Another Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our wedding• Our honeymoon• Giving birth to my baby• Seeing my baby take her first steps• Seeing my students graduate• Coaching my niece in baking skills• Teaching my son to swim	CO-CREATING Together Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our team winning first place• Singing in church choir• The president citing our successful project• Rehearsing, wearing a costume and joining in our town parade• Saving, planning and building our family home

Does the matrix above capture the secret of true joy, happiness, and fulfillment?

While reflecting on your answers to Question One, read this quote by Aditi Nerurkar discussing the research of Steven Cole, professor of medicine and psychiatry at the University of California, Los Angeles:

Philosophers have long distinguished two distinct forms of happiness, hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being, and recent evidence suggests that they may have different biological correlates,” Cole writes. “Hedonic well-being is the type of happiness that comes from experiencing lots of positive emotions,” while eudaimonic well-being “is our sense of purpose and direction in life, our involvement in something bigger than ourselves.” Of the two terms, as Cole uses them in his research, eudaimonic well-being in particular is associated with a more favorable profile of gene activity in immune cells, according to Cole. ... [W]hen we looked at the cellular and molecular level, eudaimonic well-being had much more favorable molecular correlates than hedonic well-being.^[4]

In short, happiness from a greater sense of purpose leads to greater health and well-being.

Please reflect upon this question: why do you think memorable feelings of joy, happiness, and fulfillment come to us whenever we perform creative acts?

First Creative Pathway: Re-creating Yourself

The first creative pathway is Re-creating Yourself. When you perform this creative act, the result is a different and better you. It could be graduating from college, travelling abroad for the first time, or finishing a triathlon. Here are some peak life experiences from our co-authors:

[4] Aditi Nerurkar, "What A Happy Cell Looks Like", *The Atlantic*, last modified 2020, accessed April 13, 2020, <https://bit.ly/pathway-happycell>. (Thanks to CCLFI Managing Director Babes Afafe for sending us the article.)

“When I passed the board exam in one take.” *Ygdrasil Villamater.*

“Getting a promotion in my career.” *Jena Bagayana.*

“My completing the national security administration master’s course. The whole national security course itself changed my perspective and motivation to a nobler cause.” *Philip Peñafior.*

“The train ride was the culmination of a life-long dream to visit Japan. Like Alice in Wonderland, it is when we enter the rabbit hole that we really see.” *Gerald Quisumbing.*

“Our first trip abroad.” *Jena Bagayana.*

“Passing the nursing licensure exam.” *Laarni Airha Garcia and Hanica Amaranto.*

“I didn’t have classical music training but I still managed to get into one of the colleges. I pushed for it and put a lot of effort into it. Yet in my last year, I failed to qualify to perform in our graduation recital. I was given another chance and I was able to pass it after another try. Looking back, I have no regrets and I say that it’s one of my most glorious experiences. It made me grow, tough and gentle in my approach in life.” *Joan Hope Elgincolin.*

“To conquer the self is the *jihad* or holy war.” *Philip Peñafior.*

“I was an overworked mother and partner who had to support three children and an unemployed partner. He was diagnosed with diabetes. Even then, he refused to quit smoking or change his eating habits. Every day was a struggle as I had to fight the feeling of bitterness, resentment, and defeat. Then one day, my brother invited me to attend a Born Again service. The pastor preached about God’s constant presence in our life whether we were going through something good or something bad. I cried on the way home and I knew at the time that I wanted to renew my relationship with the Lord. Since then, my perspective has changed and I learned to be more reliant on the Lord. The following year, my partner got his appointment with the Lord. I decided to homeschool my kids to develop their character and to be a more intentional parent. I would say that that decision is also one of the best ones I made. Today, my life is not spared by hardships, but I have a different perspective and I am better at handling them.” *Chelli Adasa.*

“I finished my B.S.Nursing and I am a product of God’s Grace.” *Mary Grace dela Vega.*

“Change from within: it was not until my wife Marissa was diagnosed with breast cancer that I decided to stop smoking completely. Another effect in my life is that I have learned to let go of the reality of death.” *Rommel Ancheta.*

“Finishing my master’s degree.” *Ronald Camit.*

“Total surrender to God followed by a beautiful dream that signaled my miraculous healing from four simultaneous life-threatening illnesses threatening me for four years.” *Serafin Talisayon.*

“I got very ill and had to undergo a major breast operation. I went through several treatments. I wanted to give up at times but I distracted myself by continuing my studies while working and looking after my kids. I’m continuing my treatment up to now. I don’t feel bad that I’m weaker physically. I’m happy that I can still do whatever I like to do. My peak in life is surviving and being happy with what life throws me. I can survive anything.” *Ren Dytuco.*

“It was a great pleasure for me when I passed the Grade 8 national exam. Since I learned and prepared well for Grade 12 (school leaving national) exam, I passed the exam with distinction and got admitted to the university — my great joy!” *Ketema Kebebew Garedeew.*

“When I graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, it was a dream come true against all odds. It had been my dream to be a doctor since I was 5 years old.” *Ricardo Guanzon.*

“Having someone to love is family. Having somewhere to go is a home. Having both is a blessing.” *Mary Jane Tesoro.*

“My peak moments were when I received the acceptance letter, got a scholarship, and then graduated from Columbia University.” *Paula Fernanda Hurtado Calderon.*

“After three months of stay in Europe, I came back to the Philippines a different person; I would never be the same again.” *Ryan Aguilar.*

“In 2007, there was a financial crisis and I found myself out of work as clients cancelled their IT spending, including projects I was involved in. I went back to my high school and got accepted as a teacher. I have a portfolio now and I am happy where I am professionally. I still do some IT work but I find writing and teaching more fulfilling.” *Gladys Barrer.*

Second Creative Pathway: Pro-creating Another

The second creative pathway is **Pro-creating Another**, because it covers the creative actions of helping others to re-create themselves. These actions may be procreating and nurturing one's children, coaching a niece in a skill or life orientation, teaching, helping a colleague overcome a life crisis, and other similar acts. Here are examples:

"Our wedding day." *Jena Bagayana.*

"I realized that the Ph.D. degree blessed upon me by God was not for my personal aggrandizement but should serve a higher purpose. A university in Bacolod City earnestly asked me to be the Vice President for academics and turn around the institution because it was losing money. Honestly, my stint in this university tested my moral fortitude, beliefs, and character."
Lloyd Bautista.

"My daughter Pia's sparks of joy, creativity, and life." *Paula Fernanda Hurtado Calderon.*

"I love being a teacher because I can confidently say that each day has been a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the students I have encountered through the years and to learn important and valuable life lessons from them." *Manuel Manuel III*

"As a father of three, the moment the doctor congratulates you for having a new member of the family and that your wife is safe — the feeling of immense joy overcomes the mixed emotions while waiting." *Tivo Mallillin.*

"A six-year break from work to take care of ailing parents and two children."
Elena Cruz

"A strong inner impulse has propelled me back home to Kenya from the Netherlands, where I settled with my husband and two children 15 years ago. This time I'm the one doing everything in my power to give something back to my frail and ageing parents." *Wangu Mwangi.*

"I held my new grandson Miles close to my chest. It felt like I was seeing a mystery that just unfolded. I was in total awe, seeing this beautiful, perfect being. An instant bond was created. I was overpowered by so much joy, so much love." *Mary Ann Paulino.*

"I'm now a dad!" *Ygdrasill Villamater.*

"One of the moments in my life when I felt great joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment was when my wife gave birth to our first daughter. I think the joy came from seeing oneself in another human being — through the mystery of procreation. I was also happy that my wife had successfully overcome the difficulties of pregnancy and safely delivered our baby." *Roberto Nebrida.*

"During the first month of my pregnancy, I had malaria. I consulted two doctors and both said that I had to be treated first. My OB-Gyne said that the mother should be saved first, so I agreed to be treated. That meant taking a quinine drip and other medicines. Pregnant women with malaria risked having children with birth defects. When I gave birth, my first question to my doctor was if my baby was normal. She said yes. I called it God's miracle. My son is now 26 years old and is currently reviewing for the Medical Board Exam." *Jocelyn Wee.*

"One of my hobbies was horse riding. When I moved to Germany, someone said they had an old retired "dressage" horse in their horse club. It turned out that the horse was around 17 years old and too tired. I had all sorts of problems with the horse. The club manager said the horse was too old to learn new things but I should try something I was more used to doing. As I used to ride horses in my uncle's farm, I decided to try the American style "Western riding." I bought a lot of books, started riding more on the open green field and less in the closed paddock, hired a Western riding trainer for a few classes to guide me through, and the horse loved it. I even got some Western bridles and a bitless bridle. On the right path, the old age of the horse wasn't a hindrance anymore. We finally trusted each other to work and learn together." *Leila Valente.*

Third Creative Pathway: Creating Something New

The third creative pathway is **Creating Something New** and useful. This is often referred to as “technological innovation.”

“First million-peso IT project.” *Don Valle.*

“Creation of one of the first corporate Intranets in 1992. I worked as Information Manager at KPMG in their HQ in the Netherlands.” *Daan Boom.*

“With the guidance of my MTM professors and support of family and colleagues, I was able to address the three decades of operational problems in my division. This resulted in streamlined processes leading to one day release of retirement benefits.” *Leizel Lectura.*

Fourth Creative Pathway: Co-creating with a Team

The fourth creative pathway is **Co-creating with a Team** something new and useful for a community or for society. Some development specialists call the products “social innovations.”

“Living in the Kingdom of Bhutan as expat/UNDP consultant in rural enterprise development.” *Victor G Perez.*

“When our house was constructed and completed nine years ago.” *Aldrin Bagayana.*

“Convening a group of reform-minded Filipino leaders to help President Fidel Ramos craft his Philippines 2000 reform strategy.” *Serafin Talisayon.*

“I love seeing people succeed against all odds, especially if I played even a small part in it. In 2007, I served in a small rural organization as project manager to empower youth 18-25 years by teaching them vocational knowledge and skills, help them get start-up capital, establish small businesses, and link them to markets. Looking back after ten years, the young men and women now have their own lives. Some are thriving in their businesses, others are employed, but all are alive and hopefully, happy.” *Gregory Makabila.*

“After three years of working for the largest search engine in the world. I was deployed to New York City for two months of work and it was a great experience meeting all the people we have worked with throughout the years. Spending time with them helped build a better relationship with them.” *Paulo Sumawang.*

“PeGI Assessor, or Pemringkatan e-government Indonesia. We became one of the assessors always invited by the ministry to assess the existing e-government and incubator and startup development. We could get in touch with some technology business startups that have good ideas. We could connect with existing business incubation associations in Indonesia and engage more in incubator development.” *Haitan Rachman.*

“I was given the opportunity to lead the whole team and become their manager. The peak was when a member of my team told me that I created a work environment that they loved. This gesture, though very simple, was the most fulfilling moment I could recall.” *Leo Reyes.*

“A company to retire; a dream come true. I wanted to join a company that I can truly serve for a long time and retire.” *Rommel Ancheta.*

“I organized and led a *Brigada Eskwela* activity [volunteer work to help public schools] for our company. It felt so fulfilling to receive feedback from our benefactors, especially the priceless smiles of the young students. The feedback from the volunteers was encouraging and motivating, too. They also felt fulfilled despite feeling tired after completing the initially impossible-to-complete goals for *Brigada Eskwela*. This experience is memorable.” *Paul Mikki Sakurai.*

“To dream of a more humane world.” *Philip Peñaflo.*

An Experiential Narrative on Question One: Discover Your Creative Pathway

by Lloyd Bautista

My favorite uncle used to remind me that life is a journey rather than a destination. In this journey, there will be ups and downs, ebbs and flows, deaths and rebirths. Old people die to give way to the young. This is the beautiful cycle of life. Instead of fearing death, we should think about what we are leaving behind to make life better for our loved ones, communities, and nation.

But the most important thing he said was that it's not the wealth we accumulate but how we nurture and cultivate relationships with others. In this journey, some will stay, disembark earlier, sit with you longer, or seek your love and care. Indeed, my storied life has had its own peaks and valleys.

First Creative Pathway: Re-creating Yourself

The most memorable phase of my life was finishing my Doctorate degree in Public Administration in 2009 at the University of the Philippines. I had to quit a secure job in a state corporation so that I may finally complete my dissertation and obtain this much-coveted degree after seven years. But as I was about to submit my final paper, I went through a laparoscopic gallbladder surgery. I was confined in the hospital for a week and it stopped my journey for a Doctorate degree dead on its tracks. With my diminishing finances, I had no options but to really pray hard as I have never done before so that I may overcome this tribulation. And I did overcome it, with God's

help, as I officially graduated in 2010 after completing my dissertation.

Fast forward to 2013, armed with a doctorate, I was now busy working as a faculty and consultant in the Development Academy of the Philippines, a government think tank dedicated into professionalizing the bureaucracy. Aside from teaching Public Management and Governance subjects, I was also experiencing one of my most lucrative earning years as a freelance consultant. I was doing projects for USAID and AusAID and helping my family's financial well-being.

However, this era of peace and prosperity was disrupted when our Dean requested me to become the Vice President for Academic Affairs in her friend's university in Western Visayas. Despite dodging her request for weeks, there was an unexplainable feeling in me to take the position and prove to others that I was not only an academic but a professional manager who could oversee a university of 300 faculty and 6,000 students. Perhaps it was my ego, the personal thrill to be stationed in a distant place with a different culture and language. After much consideration, I accepted the position and flew to the university as the new Vice President for Academic Affairs. It was a path that was thrown in front of me by some quirk of fate.

Second Creative Pathway: Pro-creating Another

During my seven-month stint in this university, all my educational training, ethical and value preferences, and intestinal fortitude were tested. The university was losing money, not because they did not have good teachers but because the institution was not investing to upgrade facilities, provide competitive salaries to faculty, and buy books and laboratory equipment to improve the quality of learning.

But during those months as Vice President, I also met well-meaning and wonderful people, like teachers, businessmen, priests, politicians, and civic-minded individuals of all walks of life. I became more spiritual and self-reflective about life. It gave me an enormous sense of balance and perspective. I learned more about the peaks and lows of life during this stint as compared to my seven years doing my Doctorate.

Standing up for your principles even at one's own peril can be the proudest moment in your life journey.

Third Creative Pathway: Creating Something New

Despite siding with the employees at the expense of those who paid my wages, another educational institution took a gambit and hired me as their new Vice President for Academics. This was a chain of schools that offered degrees in Computer, Hospitality, Management, Communications, Tourism, Engineering, and Accounting.

During this period, I embarked on a massive program to reinvigorate the academic division through outcome-based education, faculty training and capacity-building, linkages and partnerships, and student development and welfare. Management was pleased with my efforts and initiatives, and I saw my prominence rising. Teachers and non-academic personnel were motivated with the energy I brought in across the network.

However, by my third year, I was exhausted by the internal politics. I felt like I had to prioritize profit over delivering quality education. I was demoralized, but there were financial risks if I decided to resign and leave the organization.

I was relegated to a small division. In my fifth year, I went through my lowest point, with a sense of listless purpose and an arid feeling of not making any difference. I was working like a zombie with no ounce of zest.

By the sixth year, I was asked to resign. Without any golden parachute to rely on, I jumped outside my imagined comfort zone. My family was severely affected and uncertain of what lay ahead. I entered another limbo in my roller coaster of a life journey.

Fourth Creative Pathway: Co-creating with a Group

A week after resigning as Vice President for Academics, the Ateneo School of Government — one of the country's leading policy and leadership schools — called and asked me to work as a faculty and researcher. One pressing project they needed assistance was the resettlement program of the Department of Interior and Local Government across 18 relocation sites. Ateneo was tasked to conduct a field research, develop modules for training implementors, and assess the local government's performance with respect to resettlement. It rejuvenated the sleeping *ikigai* in my soul as I worked with a team of twenty-something researchers.

We went to different resettlement sites and interviewed hundreds of relocated informal settlers. In our final report, I made a public presentation before officials and personnel of different local governments. This journey reignited the lost energy I had and reaffirmed the path I chose to pursue education, capacity building, and social development as my mission.

As I enter my 50s, there are several realizations that I have embraced and accepted. First, the ebbs and flows of life are what makes our journey interesting. Without them, life will be an aimless boat drifting in the sea of uncertainty. Every now and then, you need storms to shake you up from slumber.

Second, it is our own mental model that deprives us of seizing opportunities and taking calculated risks. In my stint as Vice President, the zest for challenges dissipated because I thought that my journey had reached its pinnacle. But, as my uncle advised, it is the relationships with people that makes your journey more meaningful. God has given me the rare moment to meet, engage, and experience different people.

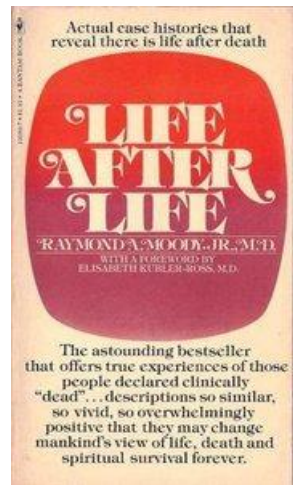
Finally, the most important and valuable notion of life is really making life a little easier for your loved ones, friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and even strangers. The hug you give to your child, the small change you give to a beggar, or the smile you share to a colleague are what defines our journey. With a few decades left in mine, I know that we will be judged by Divine Providence by not how much we acquired as personal achievements and earthly possessions but how much we gave to others.

Question Two: Self-Assessment Along Three Final Life Questions

There are many recorded cases where people who were pronounced dead (no heartbeat, no breathing) mysteriously revived. This phenomenon has been called a near death experience or NDE by researchers.

After Raymond Moody's best seller *Life After Life* was published in 1975, decades of NDE research found that those who revived often recalled experiences while they were "away" and that there are many similarities across experiences:

- The sense of getting out and looking down on their physical body.
- Passing through a dark tunnel and emerging into a place of light.
- Disappearance of any physical pain which is replaced by a feeling of peace, being loved, and accepted.
- Being met by relatives and friends who had died.
- Meeting a powerful spiritual being who is variously interpreted as Jesus, God, an angel, a "Being of Light," or some other spiritual person.



- With the “Being of Light,” watching a fast review of their lives like a movie.
- Being asked three common questions by the Being of Light during the life review: What have you **learned**? What have you contributed (your **legacy**)? Who have you **loved** or helped?

The NDE subjects were scattered across the United States. They were not in communication with one another and hence it was unlikely that they conspired to tell similar stories. In fact, some NDE people were hesitant to tell their stories because they regarded their experience as very private and significant, completely life-changing and even sacred.

Time to answer **Question Two**: ponder on these three important questions about your learning, your legacy and your loves. What would be your answers to the three questions at this point in life?

1. What have you **learned**?
2. What **legacy** have you contributed?
3. Who have you **loved** or helped?

Write your answers in your notebook. Please do not move to the next page until after writing your answers.

The Three Final Life Questions

The three end-of-life or final questions reported by many NDE subjects are consistent with the four creative pathways in Question One, where the Creation and Co-creation Pathways both produce legacies or contributions by individuals and teams.

Figure 2.1: Answers to Three Final Questions

<p>What Have You Learned?</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduating from college• Passing the Board Exam• Climbing to the summit of Mount Pulag• Finishing in triathlon• Getting my Six Sigma black belt• Surviving cancer• My first travel abroad	<p>What Have You Contributed?</p> <p>Examples (alone):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assembling my first working robot• Harvesting from my vegetable garden• Writing poems• My photo in Instagram getting 500 likes• Playing the piano in family gatherings
<p>Who Have You Loved/Helped?</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our wedding• Our honeymoon• Giving birth to my baby• Seeing my baby take her first steps• Seeing my students graduate• Coaching my niece in baking skills• Teaching my son to swim	<p>What Have You Contributed?</p> <p>Examples (together):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our team winning first place• Singing in church choir• The president citing our successful project• Rehearsing, wearing a costume and joining in our town parade• Saving, planning and building our family home

Observe the clear correspondence or agreement between peak life experiences of people and the final life questions asked by the Being of Light to the NDE person.

Insights and Lessons Learned

We were not able to receive a lot of responses to the Three Final Life Questions, but we expect more answers as new Reader-Authors join the conversation.

We will quote instead the insights and learning from Conversation 2 of our first two batches of Reader-Authors.

“While I have learned a lot, I think there is still much to learn. In addressing the other questions, I found myself opening up a whole world full of questions.” *Gerald Quisumbing.*

“Spontaneous or anything-goes learning can happen while having a casual conversation, an aha moment after contemplation, an accidental discovery after doing something over and over.” *Ryan Aguilar.*

“I realize that learning doesn’t stop.” *Mary Grace dela Vega.*

“It is our parents who build on who we are. We may choose to follow their advice exactly or, as we grow older, improve on their advice.” *Ygdrasill Villamater.*

“Love is one thing you cannot buy.” *Laarni Airha Garcia.*

“Life is not about diplomas or high positions or high paying jobs. It’s not about popularity or influence or oblivion. It’s not about how rich or poor one is. It’s not about ambitions and desires left unfulfilled nor the promises made and broken. Life is about how one is able to understand one’s true self, of his own being human with all its grandeur and frailty, with his own brokenness or the richness of his spirit, including all the love found or lost. Behind all success or failure is the constant yearning to throb with the rest of humanity and all the universe. This constant yearning of the self to be one with the whole of creation is but an affirmation of metaphysical unity of being.” *Philip Peñaflo.*

“Loving and helping others through learning.” *Ronald Camit.*

“What I have learned and committed myself to is the role of education in transforming our families and communities. Rather than allowing my life story to be dictated by other forces in the world, I have chosen education as a continuing life-project that represents my day-to-day engagement as a being-within- the-world.” *Lloyd Bautista.*

“To sum it up: being more conscious, more aware of Divine presence in our being. Love overflows.” *Mary Jane Tesoro.*

“I am a cerebral person. I study all the time. As I reflect on my life, I realize that I have not contributed enough and have not loved enough. I think it is time to get out of my head.” *Gladys Barrer.*

“I am a work-in-process. Going through this exercise makes me see my own inadequacies. I renew my resolution to do more, to do better, to try harder.” *Mary Ann Paulino.*

“Some experiences have taught me to unlearn the things I have learned in the past.” *Rommel Ancheta.*

“I still feel the urge to pursue greater things: those that can last or be sustainable in creating a positive difference in the lives of people. A number of things are in my mind. I need to immediately identify and focus on one key area in which I can make this happen.” *Roberto Nebrida.*

Notable Absence

Did you notice that after the instant life review, the Being of Light didn’t ask questions such as “How big and expensive is (are) your house(s)?” or “How many cars did you own?” or “How much assets or net worth have you accumulated?” In the end, our tangible assets are not important.

An Experiential Narrative on Question Two: Self-Assessment along Three Final Life Questions

by Serafin Talisayon

Life After Life was one of the books that left a deep imprint in my life. To me, it provided the first scientific evidence about what happens after we die. It also gave me an important guide to what, ultimately, are important versus unimportant in one's life. I invented the term "three L's" to summarize the three final life questions asked by the Being of Light after the instantaneous review of our life: Love, Legacy, and Learning. They are three questions one can ask oneself at any time.

My Loves

My expressions of love and helping have been very wide. It has extended beyond my family.

My education up to Ph.D. had been financed from scholarships and so my wife and I decided to "pay it backward" by giving numerous scholarships to poor but bright children I have forgotten to keep track of. I have been a teacher most of my life. I savor those moments when I see them catch an inspiring idea. Said one my students:

The way Professor Talisayon handled the course reminded me of Yoda. He did not pretend to know everything, but instead facilitated an interactive learning process where students were free to contribute and stand by what they believed, without reproach. This is one course you will be using the rest of your learning days.

After retiring from the university, I continue to teach despite the low pay. I do it because I love teaching, I love to help students, and I love to see them graduate and follow their career and family growth through Facebook.

During my sabbatical leave in Singapore in 1987, I experienced a complete and miraculous healing from three life-threatening illnesses. I knew my “life extension” was to be devoted to some life mission. I have since grown in my practice of listening to God or to the Spiritual Universe for cues as I pursue a life mission. I have formed a loving two-way relationship with my guardian angel and many unseen helpers who continue to help me pursue those missions. They have helped me too many times and always at the right moment. How this book was conceived and written is a story full of many timely and unbelievably helpful cues and contributions from helpers seen and unseen. I no longer believe in coincidence.

My colleagues at CCLFI are my second family. I love them dearly. I grow and learn with them as we practice conscious living and mutually supportive spiritual self-development. They support my personal book projects.

Every time I read about the poverty and warfare around the world, I am moved by compassion. I wrote *Healing Our Divided Planet* as an expression of that compassion.

I see myself as very generous. I give big tips to waiters and food delivery motorcycle riders; coffee and water heaters to security guards to keep them awake at night; and Christmas gifts to helpers, drivers, the village street sweeper, and the old woman who scavenges in our village.

In my old age, I am learning how to love Mother Earth more: taking care and appreciating our little garden in our CCLFI office, watering the plants constantly and looking after them. I am slowly replacing my aversion to small creatures like mice, flies, ants, and cockroaches with an understanding and admiration of their will to live, to constantly look for food and survive.

As I walk and move around town, I see people wrapped in their own self-created problems and mentally I give them my good wishes and blessings. I always engage Grab drivers in appreciative conversations and I always discover the good things and the difficulties they are experiencing. I look at all of these experiences with love and gratitude.

My Legacies

Since I started teaching in 1963, the learning and inspiration received by my appreciative students has been one of my continuing legacies. After my first semester of teaching, one of my students who got a failing grade of 5 approached me, smiling and thanking me for her learning experiences. That was my first puzzling but very encouraging feedback from a student. Today is 2020 and I am still enjoying teaching and leaving legacies to those receptive students inspired by my jokes and stories that always convey a life meaning or a life hack.

I took a respite from teaching and briefly ventured into the different world of politics and national governance. I saw it as a calling and life mission to help the Filipino nation by serving in the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos. He was one of the great superiors I was fortunate to work for.

During the campaign, I helped frame the platform of Lakas-NUCD, his political party. I became a registered Christian Democrat. After we won, he appointed me as Assistant Director General for Policy of the National Security Council, with a sub-cabinet rank of Assistant Secretary. Under his leadership and guidance, I helped in national initiatives such as *Philippines 2000*, the broader seven elements of what has since been enshrined in our national security policies, *Pamathalaan* or training in sacred governance for government officers, the Pole-Vaulting Strategy, and many others.

My books and writings were mostly academic at that time, but after serving the national government and co-founding our non-profit CCLFI, the books and creative works I wrote or co-authored became oriented towards helping peoples and communities: *Community Wealth Rediscovered: Knowledge for Poverty Alleviation*; *Healing Our Divided Planet: Stories of Transboundary Learning for our Grandchildren*; *39 Simple Low-Cost Projects in Knowledge Management and Innovation*; *99 Paradigm Shifts for Survival in the Global Knowledge Economy*; and now this book, *Follow Your Creative Pathway*.

CCLFI's advocacy of conscious living has slowly changed my personal behaviors and practices towards constant daily self-reflection, internal and external listening, connecting the dots in my micro and macro life patterns to the point that my interactions with the people around me have conveyed to them somehow the advantages and benefits of conscious living. My students and some colleagues love the many stories I tell them and I believe I have left a lasting imprint in the lives of some of them.

My Learnings

Conscious living, mindfulness, and self-directed growth are great practices because I keep learning many things about myself and others. Learning has become a part of living and the result is lessons that are too numerous to list. My important learnings are the following.

First, personal and global problems stem from unworkable and scientifically incorrect mindsets. Yet people are unable to free themselves from their own limiting beliefs because either they are only half-aware of their mindsets or they mistake their beliefs for reality. The practice of **managing mental models** is the first of five disciplines or life hacks according to Peter Senge, the guru of organizational learning.

Second, the constant practice of conscious living will slowly enable one to discern, behind the noise and conflict around us, that there is Purpose and Compassion working behind all events from personal to global. A greatly helpful life hack I learned from an indigenous spiritual group in Pangasinan is the *Pagbabasa ng Buhay na Aklat* (Reading the Living Book). They believe that your daily life is akin to scripture authored by God specifically for you, hence your own living book that you must keenly study, observe, and discern for cues on your evolving life purposes and direction.

Third, if peoples and nations are guided by consensual discernment of this Purpose — instead of their political, religious, cultural and other self-constructed mental differences — then we can start to achieve peace in our little home planet. One of the life hacks in the *Pamathalaan* Course is the way of Abraham. Abraham — the common ancestor of Jews, Christians, and Muslims — had no

scripture or church authority to rely on. He used direct discernment of God's will. Communal discernment of the Holy Spirit (rhema or "heard Word") is what early Christians practiced before there were bibles (logos or "written Word"), churches or priesthods.

Fourth, anyone can contribute towards this peace wherever they are, and however small or large their circles of influence are. Here are two popular life hacks for contributing to world peace:

"Don't promise when you are happy. Don't reply when you are angry. Don't decide when you are sad." — *Ziad K. Abdelnour*.

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." — *Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom*.

Recall that during his inauguration as President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela invited his former jailer of 27 years to sit in the front row with him, a clear message to all South Africans and the world.

Question Three: Your More Permanent Assets

Efficient and/or effective action is what creates value in the physical world, whether it is market value in the private sector or social value in the public or development sectors. In the modern world, creating value is often the work of teams and organizations, much more than by solitary individuals.

Question Three is this: what things or people, factors, situations or conditions, inputs or ingredients help your team do its job well?

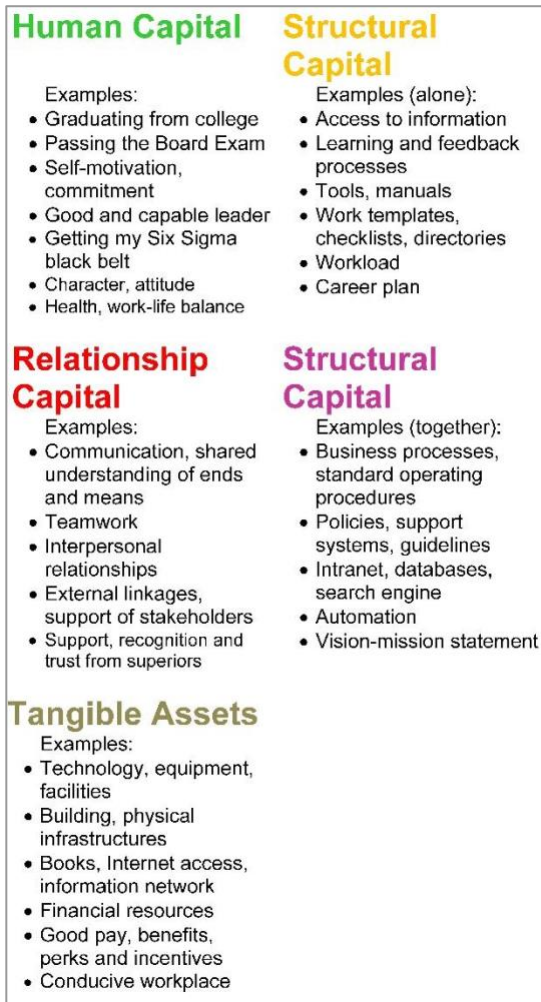
Reflect on your past work and professional experiences and list your answers in your notebook.

Please do not move to the next page unless you finish listing all your answers.

What Creates Value in the Physical World

CCLFI has collected thousands of data on Question Three through its workshops and training courses. The answers always fall into four categories: the three intangible categories in Figure 3.1 and a fourth category, tangible assets (money, technology, equipment, etc.).

Figure 3.1: Inputs for Effective Action



If structural capital created or used by individuals is distinguished from those by teams, the categories coincide neatly with the same four categories in Question One and Two.

The term **human capital** is borrowed from economics but the new terms **structural capital** and **relationship capital** (or **relational**

capital) are terms from the new field of intellectual capital management. The term **tangible asset** is from accounting.

According to accountants, **intangible assets** are those not assigned with money value, not traded in the market, and not entered in accounting books. The three types of intangible assets are mostly knowledge assets well-known in the fields of knowledge management and intellectual capital management.

In the current global knowledge economy, intangible assets are now creating more market and social value than tangible assets.

- Over 65% of Gross World Product is now produced by the service sector, which is the most knowledge-intensive sector.^[5] Knowledge assets which are intangible have become the critical producers of wealth — more than physical or tangible assets such as mineral, agricultural, energy, and other natural products raw or processed.
- In stock markets, market value of stocks outstrips the book value or tangible assets of a company. Book value accounts for only 20-40% of market value;^[6] the rest of market value is from intangible assets. Since buyers and sellers in the stock market bid up the market value of company stocks they anticipate will earn more in the future, then we can say that the earning power of companies is more from its intangible assets than from its book value.
- At the individual level, an employee's explicit knowledge in documents and in computers can be lost, destroyed or stolen,

[5] "Services, Value Added (% Of GDP)," *World Bank*, last modified 2020, accessed April 13, 2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.SRV.TOTL.ZS>.

[6] "Price-To-Book (P/B) Ratio by Sector 1979 – 2020," *Siblis Research*, last modified 2020, accessed April 13, 2020, <https://siblisresearch.com/data/price-to-book-sector/>.

but not tacit knowledge such as the employee's expertise and experiences.

In Question Two, the Being of Light didn't ask about your material legacy. Instead, the Being of Light asked "Who have you loved or helped?" and if this applies to the recipients of your donations and inheritance, then these would be to your credit.

Reflect on this. When each of us finally goes, we must leave behind all our tangible assets: bank deposits, cash, house and lot, cars, clothes, jewelry, etc. Our intangible assets (Learning, Legacy, and Love) are really our permanent assets.

Note these advantageous characteristics of knowledge assets:

- When you share knowledge assets, they create benefits for others and you still get to keep them. When you teach someone what you know, you retain that knowledge. In contrast, give away tangible assets and you lose them completely.
- In many cases, sharing knowledge assets increases their value. The more a doctor practices her skills, the more skillful she becomes. If a doctor stops practicing, her skills deteriorate. Teachers gain new insight from their students' questions. Knowledge assets appreciate when used; tangible assets depreciate when used.
- A study of over 900 anti-poverty projects in the Philippines revealed that the most successful ones were those that leveraged on pre-existing knowledge and other intangible

assets of a local community, more than the financial and technological assets infused from outside.^[7]

- When you put explicit knowledge to practice (eg., follow a manual or a recipe), you encode it into your tacit knowledge. With coaching from an expert cook, you enrich that tacit knowledge. Practice enables one to gain tacit knowledge, which cannot be lost or stolen.
- Benefits from sharing are multiplied if done in a group or network. The more diverse the experiences of group members, the more knowledge can be combined, validated, or generated. The more the global economy becomes knowledge-based, the more it leads to a global culture of sharing.

Please reflect on these questions about your more permanent assets:

- What tangible and intangible (but permanent) assets have you accumulated?
- What have you learned about yourself? What is your most significant learning in the past week?
- What knowledge, big or small, have you shared with someone lately?
- What new skills have you practiced last month?
- What new technical skill do you intend to learn in the next few months?
- Is there a soft or emotional skill you wish to learn in the next few months?

Jot down your reflections and insights in your notebook, then read on.

^[7] “Community Wealth Rediscovered: Knowledge for Poverty Alleviation | Community and Corporate Learning for Innovation,” *CCLFI*, last modified 2020, accessed April 14, 2020, https://www.cclfi.net/estore/kpa_ebook.

Here are the reflections and insights from the co-authors and collaborators. Their honesty, willingness to disclose and to share a valuable part of themselves in this book are worthy of our attention, appreciation, and gratitude.

“I think I have acquired more intangible assets than tangible ones in my life. I believe that the intangible assets I have acquired are priceless compared with my tangible assets. Tangible assets, I could lose them anytime as I did in the past. Or they get old and non-functional. Intangible assets remain and become part of my persona.” *Philip Peñaflo*.

“We do underestimate the power of intangible assets in our life. I realized way back that the acquisition of intangible assets would depend on the scale and reach of your tangible assets. Thus, the symbiosis between these two types of assets is an eternal truism. Intellectual capital (intangible) cannot grow and flourish unless you have the funds (tangible) to pay for a good education from a reputable school. Corollary to this, you can widen your network of friends or relationship capital (intangible) only if you can travel to distant places through your motor vehicle (tangible) or host events in your home (tangible). The two cannot survive without the other.” *Lloyd Bautista*.

“I had to look back to my 65 years of existence and see clearly the interplay of tangible and intangible assets in my life. My parents exemplified the virtue of honest hard work. They worked hard to build our home and send us all to school. I learned from them that through hard work, I, with my husband, could build a home for our family. In the past 30 years in Canada, we followed my parents’ example and worked hard. We eventually built our own home and sent our children to school. Our two children are responsible adults, have their own careers and their own homes. I would like to believe that we have raised them with values that allowed them to be where they are now. I can happily close my eyes and know that I have done the best I could and they will be alright.” *Mary Ann Paulino*.

“Tangible assets are the material things that help us survive in our daily life, while intangible assets are the ones that develop within yourself. Intangible assets are life learning. They help you grow and overcome the challenges in life. Just keep an open mind and be proactive in all the possibilities in life.” *Laarni Airha Garcia*.

“I do not have enough tangible heritage to offer Pía, my daughter, and this causes me a lot of stress. But the heritage I offer her is the knowhow, the

resources to re-create herself. I graduated from an Ivy League university (Columbia University), and am pursuing my second Master's Degree at another leading university this year. Re-creating myself is something I value so much because I care about growing and sharing wisdom. Another re-creation of mine was the Knowledge Management and Community Management Certification I invested in, this year. Pia can learn anything in the world as her mother does not stop to learn." *Paula Fernanda Hurtado Calderon.*

"I ask myself jokingly, have I hoarded enough to support a decent and dignified retirement when my human capital is depleted or diminished, when I am sick, weak, and old? Can I afford to start a family so that in the end I can rely on my relationship capital with my children to help me in my old age?" *Ryan Aguilar.*

"Interestingly enough, researchers have found that our relationships determine our health later in life." *Gerald Quisumbing.*

"Tangible and intangible assets are both important for a team, may it be at work or in the family. If we want to have a much longer effect, we should invest more on intangible assets." *Jena Bagayana.*

"Since my mom is older and her health situation isn't like it was before, I made a decision to go home weekly. Whether it's engaging in conversations with students about anything outside of their studies or having lunch with colleagues and talking about anything under the sun, the relationships I have built in my stay in UP Diliman have become valuable to me. I have learned so much from my interactions with students and colleagues and this has contributed to who I am today. A significant part of my life has been spent being a member of a Catholic charismatic community and it is here where I have built very significant relationships over the years. Relationships matter and value will always be experienced in the relationships that one cherishes, treasures, and builds over time. I can confidently say that the relationships I have are true assets in my life." *Manuel Manuel III.*

"I believe that intangible assets (knowledge) help to make tangible assets (e.g. money) that in turn build intangible assets if we appropriately invest in the same and vice versa in some cases. So, the individual, family, nation, and the world can benefit from the integration of tangible and intangible assets, provided that they are used for the common good and productive investment." *Ketema Kebebew Garedeew.*

An Experiential Narrative on Question Three: Your More Permanent Assets

by Manuel C. Manuel III

When I reflect on the questions “What tangible and intangible — but permanent — assets have you accumulated?” and “What have you learned about yourself?”, one major source of answers comes from the vocation taking up half of my life: teaching.

I love being a teacher because, even after many years of dealing with students and doing lectures, activities, and checking papers, I still look forward to each day in school and the variety of experiences that go with it. I can confidently say that every day has been a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the students and to learn important and valuable life lessons from them. This has become a mutual exchange of ideas, experiences, and lessons between student and teacher. It’s not just about the academic lessons one imparts or gets in the classroom. More importantly, it’s about the positive impact I can make as a teacher/mentor, somebody that students can approach even for non-academic concerns.

One memorable experience allowed me to reach out to my student amidst the pain and self-doubt he was feeling. I encouraged him to see himself as someone who may not necessarily please everyone but can be reassured that there are people like me who believe in him and his capabilities. He learned to believe in himself more and see the good in difficult and painful situations. I learned that giving an encouraging word and just being present for someone can make a lot of difference. Both of us came out armed with valuable lessons we have applied in other life situations.

Guiding a student through the intricacies of formulas, graphs, and concepts can make tutoring sessions, such as those I have had with one particular student, opportunities to make him recognize his strengths and strive hard to overcome his weaknesses. I have seen him become more confident in his abilities and he has become more proactive when dealing with both successes and failures in his subjects. What's good is that these sessions are learning opportunities for me as well, especially if I haven't taught the subject for some time.

I love being a teacher because I have been blessed to be part of the educational journey of a diverse group of students over the years — students who are a joy to teach, students who test your patience, students who ask a lot of questions and challenge your way of thinking, students who are content with going through the motions, students who have to overcome hurdles such as financial constraints and personal problems, students who look up to me as their confidant and friend, students who inspire me in my journey of learning, etc. Encounters with such students have allowed me to grow in character with patience, honesty, respect, and appreciation. Each encounter allowed me to see how I deal with certain people and situations and what I need to continue doing or to improve on.

One encounter I remember was a phone conversation with one of my students. I was on my way to grab a bite before checking papers. My cell phone rang as I was crossing the street and I found myself hurrying to the other side and stopping so I could answer the phone. A graduating student of mine wanted to consult me about job offers. That phone conversation lasted for quite a while. I wasn't sure I was being helpful. At the end of our conversation, the student thanked me for taking the time to listen and answer all his questions. He appreciated my taking his call. I was really hungry by that time, but I

found myself emotionally full because of the gratitude and appreciation expressed by my student.

Another encounter made me realize that I could share my blessings with a student who needed monetary assistance. I noticed that the student always struggled with finances. I asked him, “Would you be open to receiving funds to help you in your studies?” The student enthusiastically replied, “Yes!” He shared with me that there were times when he asked himself, “Where am I going to get the funds to finish college? Will I be able to finish college without having to go back to being a working student?” I know how valuable education is and that, no matter the obstacles, one should strive hard to get that education. This student finished college with flying colors.

I love being a teacher because I know, deep in my heart, that this is where the Lord wants me to be and He is blessing me with opportunities to be the best teacher that I can be. If you asked me after graduation from college if I would pursue a career in teaching, I would’ve said, “I don’t see myself teaching especially with so many career opportunities available to a Computer Science graduate like me.”

However, I believe the Lord has a way of letting you know what He wants you to do. In my case, it took the convincing power of my MBA Statistics professor (who later on became my mentor), a couple of MBA classmates who happened to be instructors, my best friend who pointed out that my parents were professors, and the good and not-so-good experiences I had with my first set of students.

I will always look back with joy and gratitude to that time when I decided to take a leap of faith and make that life-changing decision to teach and not go back to the corporate world. It’s been many years

since I first stepped into a classroom as a teacher and I am looking forward to many more years filled with learning experiences with my co-teachers and students.

I am blessed with relationships with students, co-teachers and administrative staff; I see them as permanent assets in my life. I have learned so much about who I am through this vocation and I want to share these blessings and lessons to others around me through the journey of learning in our lives.

Question Four:

What the World Needs to Learn the Most

In 1996 UNESCO published its global blueprint for education in the 21st century, *Learning: The Treasure Within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century*. It was the result of the work of a high-level commission headed by Jacques Delors, former president of the European Commission.

The report called for lifelong education along four areas:

- Learning to do
- Learning to be
- Learning how to learn
- Learning to relate

Look at the urgent and very serious problems and threats in the world today. Look at the prevailing personal issues among your friends, relatives and neighbors.

Here is **Question Four**: more than two decades after the Delors Report, where do you think our schools have failed?

Write your answer in your notebook. Afterwards, turn to the next page.

What the World Urgently Needs to Learn

On August 12, 2017, former President Barack Obama posted the most liked tweet on Twitter. It earned close to 4.6 million likes. Why do you think so many people resonate with the message?

Figure 4.1: Most Liked Tweet in 2017



Quoting Nelson Mandela, Obama's tweet underlined the fact that prejudice based on skin color or religion is learned. The next part of that quote is: "People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love. For love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

The biggest threats the world is facing are climate change, nuclear war, cyber war, the collapse of stock markets, and as recent events unfold, pandemics.

- Climate change is upon us, yet industrialized countries “have not met their pledged emission reduction targets”^[8] and on November 4, 2019 the United States government withdrew from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.^[9] This is a failure in international relations and in implementation by governments.
- Nuclear war and cyber war are threats arising from failure to resolve political, ideological, racial, and religious differences.
- The collapse of stock markets is from massive loss of business confidence. The Asian Development Bank estimated that the 2007-2008 financial crisis resulted in a loss of \$50 trillion.

All the above serious global threats arise from fragile or deteriorating relationship capital among nations or corporations.

The Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution says “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” UNESCO was created in 1945 and still, war and conflict continue unabated. Little progress has been made in education to enable men and women to learn how to talk, understand, and live together.

[8] David G. Victor et al., “Prove Paris Was More Than Paper Promises,” *Nature* 548, no. 7665 (2017): 25-27.

[9] Brady Dennis, “Trump Makes It Official: U.S. Will Withdraw from The Paris Climate Accord,” *Washington Post*, last modified 2020, accessed April 13, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/11/04/trump-makes-it-official-us-will-withdraw-paris-climate-accord/>.

As this book was being edited, the coronavirus pandemic broke out. Many have observed how government leaders failed to prepare for this, focusing instead on military spending and over-borrowing at the expense of healthcare and education. The confusion and panic and finger-pointing are also indicative of the need for people and nations to improve how to relate with one another.

We need new mindsets and innovations in pro-creation (red font in Figure 4.2) and especially in co-creation (indigo font in Figure 4.2). Please note that the four priority areas for learning according to the Delors Commission can be made to fit the four categories we used in Questions One, Two, and Three.

We urgently need social innovations to better facilitate cross-cultural, interfaith, and multiracial communication and understanding. We need to learn from one another those cultural practices facilitative of pro-creation and co-creation, such as the South African *ubuntu* which means compassion arising from our bond of common humanity and the Filipino *malasakit* which is the attitude and action arising from empathy and protective concern for the welfare of another person.

What do you think? Please write your thoughts in your notebook, then move to the next page.

The collaborators in Batches 1 and 2 expressed their thoughts about these issues surrounding the urgent need for the peoples of the world to learn how to relate.

“Schools have become factories that churn out wage earners.” *Ren Dytuco*.

“There may be a number of factors missing in our educational system, but a significant part of those urgent and serious problems we are facing in the society are deeply rooted in the family. Having proper ethics and good moral values do not require any educational degree as pre-requisites. Education starts from home, even when a baby is still in the womb.” *Jena Bagayana*.

Figure 4.2: Four Areas of Priority Learning in the 21st Century



“There are subjects on history and culture. There are lessons on how to live in a community with different cultures. There are discussions on how to live in diversity. There are even associations formed in schools that allow students in different cultures to come together. But what we see in the world today shows that all these efforts are not enough. I live in an area where different cultures abound. While people co-exist, the tendency to favor and side with one’s tribe when there are conflicts is evident.” *Jocelyn Wee.*

“Schools are institutions designed to produce similar results every time. We have cookie cutter classrooms and curriculums. This is a poor recipe for knowing who we are, a foundation for us to be ourselves. Schools can teach children about relating to one another. However, schools are institutions and have a tendency to just re-create the relational environment we have now. If we are to rise above our baser human instincts, we need to jumpstart a learning environment which is both adaptive and personal.” *Gerald Quisumbing.*

“Steiner and Montessori schools in the Philippines and elsewhere in the world pay attention to diversity, culture, and tolerance.” *Daan Boom.*

“There are definitely good education systems out there. However, until these alternative education systems become the norm, the products/graduates will remain the products of the mainstream education system in place.” *Gerald Quisumbing.*

“I have worked in Afghanistan and I found the people there to be very kind. I have also worked in Juba, South Sudan which is a Catholic Country but when I attended the Sunday Mass in Arabic, I heard the priest say “Allah”. It’s the same God, but only a matter of language. From 2015 to 2017, I worked in ARMM and discovered that the Muslims are very much Filipinos. I’ve learned a lot about them, made friends with many of them, and I have overcome my prejudice against them. We have the same humanity, same hopes and aspirations, same fears, same dreams. I think what we need is to learn how to unlearn our past biases and prejudices and accept each other as brothers and sisters — one humanity, with one creator as the Father of us all.” *Philip Penaflo.*

“As a kid, I was reminded all the time that it didn’t matter what status you have in life or color of your skin, what’s important is being kind to one another. I raised my kids the same way.” *Ren Dytuco.*

“We need to learn to unlearn. We need to unlearn that success is not measured by the accumulation of wealth, but that of relating in harmony with one another and with creation. We need to unlearn that peace is better than hatred and love more powerful than war. We need to unlearn our past prejudices against each other and recognize that we are all in the same

boat, that we are all brothers and sisters, same humanity, with the same hopes and dreams. We need to unlearn greed and selfishness, and that what we need is caring and sharing to make this world a better place to live." *Philip Peñaflor.*

An Experiential Narrative on Question Four: What the World Needs to Learn Most

by Serafin Talisayon

Learning to do

I realize now that most of the opportunities for learning to do things have been outside the classroom. Before grade school, I learned how to read when I asked my grandmother to help me read a Tagalog word: *langgam* (ant). That's how I learned the alphabet. I discovered by myself that each letter in the word *langgam* corresponded to a sound. I then quickly learned to read many other words!

I was employed as a teacher at the University of the Philippines (UP) after I graduated with a bachelor's degree in physics. There is little that this degree enabled me to do except to teach. Reviewing the subsequent years, I discovered that most of my learning to do happened during my decades of consultancy work, outside the classroom.

UP had a liberal policy that allowed teachers to practice our profession. This freed us to seek consultancy engagements for 20 hours per week. My motivation then was to earn extra income; it was not easy to raise a family with the small monthly salary of a professor. After I obtained my M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in physical biology, the closest field where there was a big consultancy market in the Philippines in the 1970s to 1990s was the preparation of environmental impact statements. I became an expert in environmental management and sustainable development. Classroom

learning was only the preparation; learning to do happened when I practiced in the real world. My real-world learning in turn benefited my students. I think this is the reason behind the liberal policy of the university.

I shifted fields in 1974, when I was appointed Deputy Dean of the Institute of Strategic Studies in one of the university centers. From consultancies on the environment, this new job was on policy research. The culmination of my practice in policy research was my appointment in 1992 as Assistant Director-General for Policy of the National Security Council under President Ramos.

For seven years, I was immersed in an entirely different world of politics and real-world governance. That work experience near the apex of political power in the country was a rare opportunity in learning to do. In UP, I always avoided being chosen as dean of our college because I disliked administrative work. However, at the National Security Council I had to lead an office of around 30 skillful policy analysts. I had no choice but to learn how to lead and manage people. I had to learn how to motivate my team to produce the best, because our client was the President himself.

Most people in the public and private sectors knew that the Council was within the ambit of presidential power and thus, in that political environment, I learned how to initiate, cajole, negotiate, steer and collaborate with many other government and non-government organizations and leaders. I learned collaborative leadership through practice. The experience was tremendous, memorable, and valuable. When I returned to being a university professor in July 1998, I was a different person.

Learning to learn

I used to equate learning with studying in school. When I became a teacher at UP Los Baños, I had to self-study to become a better teacher. I took a graduate course called College Teaching where I learned how to be a student-centered rather than a subject matter-centered teacher. I was surprised to discover that one way to learn something is to teach it. I also realized that my learning to do through consultancies greatly improved my teaching. It complemented textbook knowledge with real-world knowledge. Learning was through a studying-teaching-practicing sequence.

My consultancy specializations — environmental and sustainable development (1974-1992) and policy research (1979-1998) — required multi-disciplinary collaboration with a team of experts from various disciplines. To conduct an environmental impact assessment, a team needs a botanist, zoologist, geologist, hydrologist, meteorologist, sociologist, economist and/or political scientist or public administration specialist. Working in such a team has always been a fruitful opportunity to learn from other disciplines and how to bring together the thinking from various disciplines to solve real-world problems.

My work at the National Security Council involved managing a cross-functional team of around 30 policy analysts with various country, regional, and thematic specializations. There was a China expert, an ASEAN expert, a Middle East expert, as well as an economist, a sociologist, an engineer, etc. If we lacked knowledge in a specialized area, we would call upon the right expert in other departments in the Philippine government. It was learning through multidisciplinary problem-solving.

After exiting the world of politics and governance in 1998, academic work lost its appeal to me. Fortunately, I met two ladies who were then disillusioned with work with a group involved in extra-sensory perception and psychic phenomena.

We three asked ourselves how we could make a difference. We agreed that the problems in the world stemmed from unworkable and obsolete mind sets. From there we decided to start a non-government organization based on the central idea of helping people see and manage their own mind sets. We called it the Center for Conscious Living Foundation, Inc. (CCLFI). In the last two decades, our work at CCLFI revolved around personal practice and advocacy of self-observation, mindfulness, and constant self-reflection of our own patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior.

It was a far deeper way of learning to learn about ourselves, about other people and how people succeed or fail in their behaviors. Our practice mirrors the discipline of managing mental models as described by Senge. CCLFI became an advocate and service provider in the area of personal and organizational learning and change, including knowledge management and innovation.

Learning to be

My professional life did not grow steadily in one direction. It grew by jumping from one field to another. It was a mix of my own decisions and opportunities that came my way. Let me list them down as they happened.

1. My initial interest was to be a chemical engineer. I enrolled at Adamson University in 1959. After attending one week of

classes, I was informed that I won in the nationwide Science Talent Search conducted by the Department of Science and Technology, with a full scholarship in B.S. Physics at the University of the Philippines.

2. I got my B.S. Physics cum laude in 1963 from UP Diliman campus.
3. Shortly after graduation, the Director of Instruction from the UP Los Baños (UPLB) campus offered me the position of instructor in physics and mathematics and promised that I will be given a scholarship to study abroad. I accepted and started work in June 1963.
4. Soon afterwards UPLB awarded me a Ford Foundation scholarship and I was sent off to Cornell University in February 1964 to take up studies towards a Master of Science degree in physical biology. My decision to shift to physical biology or biophysics was the fact that UPLB is the prime national training ground in agriculture and forestry. Nuclear physics or astrophysics would be irrelevant in this environment. UPLB again sent me to Cornell University in August 1967 and in February 1971 I obtained my Ph.D. in physical biology. At that stage I had taken more courses in biology than I had in physics. I had shifted from the physical to the life sciences.
5. In 1974, I was offered and accepted the job of Associate Professor and Deputy Dean of the Institute of Strategic Studies at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. My academic work shifted to policy research. I continued to work in the life sciences as a consultant in environmental management and sustainable development. I started to shift to the social sciences.
6. When I co-founded CCLFI, I again shifted my profession to personal learning, organizational learning, and knowledge

management (KM). Conscious living is a field of practice that touches heavily on psychology and the behavioral sciences. KM is a field of practice that cuts across technology (computers and information technology) and management (business process, quality management, productivity). In 2000, I accepted an affiliate faculty appointment at the UP Technology Management Center where I have been teaching knowledge management ever since.

In my two decades of practice of conscious living, I am experiencing a deeper way of learning to be, re-creating myself. This book initiative is one of the expressions of that conscious way of re-creating oneself.

Learning to relate

Learning to relate has been my most difficult and sometimes painful area of learning. In my old age I can only say that I am still an early and slow learner in this area. I only have a little to share because I am only a beginner.

I am learning how to relate through a difficult see-saw method. As a child, I related to my parents by see-sawing between obedience and disobedience, which is why they often beat me. Despite this, I still think I was not an abused child. After marriage, it was another difficult see-saw of debate-dialog and telling-listening with my wife.

As a teacher, my relationship to my students is an easier see-saw of lecturing-listening. It is easier because I hold more power in the classroom. As a child, I did not hold power at all. As a spouse I only try to equally hold power with my wife.

I continue learning to relate through all my interactions with other people, with foreigners in my many travels abroad, and especially with people who think and act differently. It is most difficult for me to relate to people who hurt other people or mean harm to others. In this area of experience, I see-saw between judging and understanding, between sheer dislike and patient tolerance and acceptance. I sometimes succeed when I can manage my ego and put my mind to see the larger picture and the bigger interests that should concern us all.

Question Five: Your Next Life Mission

Please select a time and place when and where you can quietly reflect without disturbance or interruption from anyone.

Question Five consists of two related questions about your innermost self. Ask yourself:

- What are my talents? What tasks am I good at? What do people ask me for help in?
- What are my passions? What is my ambition or goal for myself, twenty years from now? What do I love to immerse myself in? If I have all the time and resources at my disposal, what do I long to do or what is my dream project? What can I effectively talk and convince people about? Who are my heroes or ideal persons? What events or actions anger me most when I read about them in newspapers?

Write down your answers in your notebook.

Okinawa in Japan is one of the few places in the planet where many people live beyond 100 years of age. Okinawans are also observed to be a happy people.

How do they achieve this?

We suspect that among the answers is the Okinawans' traditional way of finding one's life purpose which they call *ikigai*. Watch a short video explaining *ikigai*: <https://youtu.be/M9YpJhHu7jw>. You can also read the blog by Jasper Bergink on “Ikigai: the happiness of always being busy in Japan” in this link: <https://bit.ly/pathway-ikigai>.

In addition to your talents and passions, to know your *ikigai* you need to know (1) what you can do that the world needs and (2) what you can do that others would pay you for it. However, these two additional questions are not under your control and require research; you do not need to answer them here.

An insight about life that *ikigai* shows us is this: if you do what you love to do and which you are an expert at doing, work will no longer be an unpleasant chore and you will be a happier and more productive person.

Discovering Your Creative Pathway

Choose a quiet place where you can sit down and reflect without being disturbed or interrupted by people. A garden or a place among trees can help you quiet down. Look at the sky or close your eyes. Breathe slowly. Quiet your mind, your emotions, and your body.

Review your answers to Questions One to Five. Which of the four creative pathways stands out in your life experiences? (See Figure

5.1.) Is it self-improvement? Is it nurturing family or life coaching? Is it product innovation or social innovation?

Figure 5.1: Where and How Do You Next Express Your Innate Talents, Passions, and Creativity?

<p>Self-Improvement</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduating from college• Passing the Board Exam• Climbing to the summit of Mount Pulag• Finishing in triathlon• Getting my Six Sigma black belt• Surviving cancer• My first travel abroad	<p>Product Innovation</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assembling my first working robot• Harvesting from my vegetable garden• Writing poems• My photo in Instagram getting 500 likes• Playing the piano in family gatherings
<p>Family/Life Coaching</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our wedding• Our honeymoon• Giving birth to my baby• Seeing my baby take her first steps• Seeing my students graduate• Coaching my niece in baking skills• Teaching my son to swim	<p>Social Innovation</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our team winning first place• Singing in church choir• The president citing our successful project• Rehearsing, wearing a costume and joining in our town parade• Saving, planning and building our family home

What is the pattern that emerges from your answers to the five questions? It could happen that you tend to follow more than one creative pathway. That is all right too.

Write your creative pathway(s) in your notebook.

Your Next Life Mission

Continue to stay in your chosen quiet space for reflection.

Again, review your answers to Questions One to Five. Reflect on your current life situation, what is in front of you: problems or issues, opportunities, tasks ahead big and small, recent events, and developments, etc.

Where and how do you feel you should next express your innate talents, passions and creativity? Ask yourself: at this point in your life, what is your next life mission?

A life mission does not have to be a “big” final thing. It can be something “small” but very significant to you. It can also be a long-term mission plus a series of small short-term missions. After you have accomplished a life mission, you can move on to your next life mission.

A life mission is the product of discernment of your life patterns. In the end it is your decision or choice to set the next life mission or missions ahead of you.

Write your next life mission(s) in your notebook.

If you are unable to pinpoint your next life mission then this is all right. Give yourself time. Let the experience of going through this book simmer in your consciousness. You may wake up one morning and an answer may be there. Just be receptive and wait for the idea to come to you.

An Experiential Narrative on Question Five: Your Next Life Mission

by Daan Boom

A useful model I found for reflecting on our inner self or being is the so-called Johari window. At certain intervals of life — whether it involves just myself or family, friends, or co-workers — I take time to reflect using the Johari window. I believe that, over the course of our lifetime, we intuitively or instinctively develop a set of rules of thumb, or heuristics, that serve as a compass to help us navigate in various situations, whether they are novel or very familiar to us. As I have grown in the different managerial roles I have taken on, I sometimes realize that I almost instinctively use a library of tacit knowledge to apply in a certain situation I am faced with. Sometimes, I put a decision or action on hold because I feel uncomfortable in a specific situation. Often, I am unaware of this processing. Then, suddenly, the rationale for an approach pops-up. I realize that I might be making a short-sighted decision or action that is not helping me to achieve the desired outcome. It's a quick fix.

There is a lot of work already done on this phenomenon — our blind spots, how they come about, how we can become more aware of them, how we can change the underlying basis for them. The Johari window is a technique that helps people better understand their relationships with themselves and others (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: The Johari Window

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	<p>Open</p> <p>Things that are known to you and also seen and acknowledged by others</p>	<p>Blind Spot</p> <p>Things that are unknown to you but seen and acknowledged by others</p>
Not known to others	<p>Hidden</p> <p>Things that are known to you but unknown to others</p>	<p>Unknown</p> <p>Things that are unknown to you but also unknown to others</p>

Open Space: Known to you — Known to others

Open Space behavior allows you to openly discuss the behavior with others. However, it is also possible that your friend’s actions are annoying to others, and that your friend is aware of his effect on others. So, it isn’t always easy to discuss Open Space behavior with the person concerned. Patience and caution are important in this case.

Blind Spot: Unknown to yourself — Known to others

The Blind Spot can be difficult to manage and can cause others to talk about you. This is because they can see something that you don’t. Frequent use of the same word or continuous pulling of the nose are examples of this. The Blind Spot can also occur in the working

environment. Someone can be unaware of the fact that he works slower than his colleagues.

Hidden Area: Unknown to others

In the Hidden Area, people can keep certain information to themselves and not share it with others. The co-worker can keep hidden from his fellow workers that in his free time he is a jazz guitarist. The Hidden Area can also be known to a limited number of people. The same co-worker may have a colleague who is a good friend with whom he does share his hobby, making it a subject for communication. In that case, this Hidden Area slowly shifts to Open Space.

Unknown Area: Unknown to yourself — Unknown to others

No communication exists about this Unknown Area. Purely because of the fact that both parties are unaware of it, which means it will never become the subject of discussion.

Applying the Johari to myself I selected the following life events that fit into my window.

Known to myself and others

From early childhood until college I knew that my career should be in the hotel industry. I don't know why but I was always attracted to the business, working with people, making them feel happy, assisting, and providing guidance.

Naturally, I applied to the hotel college. The first year I passed with good results. Based on this experience, I applied for a summer job and the college drafted a recommendation letter for a top hotel. I was recruited and had to report in a suit and tie on my first day in Amsterdam's most famous (and expensive) hotel for the rich and famous.

I was assessed by the maître d'hotel and sent back home because my shoes were black loafers and it was a requirement to have shoes with laces. Until now, I still try to avoid shoes with laces for numerous practical reasons (probably, this fact was only known to me and my mom). That was a bummer, but I could solve that problem.

What I couldn't solve was the horrific working hours for me, given that I was 17 at the time. I had to run breakfast service from 6 — 9 am, lunch from 11 am — 2 pm and dinner from 6 — 10 pm. By the end of the first week, I was close to being dead. I really missed my social life. After four weeks, at the end of my summer job, I definitely knew (though others didn't) that I would forego my plans to pursue a career in the hotel industry.

Blind spot

After I canceled my second year, friends all confirmed that indeed hoteling would not fit my personality because the work hours would require me to work while others were socializing. I still had to accept the fact that I wasn't continuing with hoteling.

To help me out, my friends came up with recommendations for alternative careers. One of their recommendations even had to do with the library! I knew of course from high school about the public library in Amsterdam, a huge building where you could sit, study, and read.

But the profession was not something I found very attractive. It had then, and even nowadays, an image problem.

I was already late for registration to any college so my agenda the year ahead suddenly became empty. Without college registration, I was no longer eligible to receive state income/subsidy. I applied for a temp job at the public library and I was told that I could start the next week in the Economics section, a joint section between the University and the Public Library. I liked the work, the connection with visitors and helping them out.

This was all before the digital age where information was organized according to Dewey and ordinary card catalogs. But the experience opened my eyes and I found myself applying at the College of Library and Information. Studies here would keep me busy for the next 3 years and a half even as computers were introduced and I wanted to experience this new phenomenon. I continued to work as a part-timer in the Economics section of the library.

Unknown to others

During high school and college, I avoided mathematics and related classes as my strengths leaned more towards linguistics, social sciences, and history. My first exposure to computers was an eye-opener and I really wanted to know more, but my skills were not good enough to master this. The public library procured a computer and I could use computer time from the University so I got to be a regular computer user. I graduated from college in 1973 and was thinking about where to work. The public library could not offer me a full-time position.

One of the frequent visitors of the library was the Learning and Development Manager of a large accounting and advisory company in the Netherlands, KPMG. One Saturday, we talked socially and I selected new arrivals and new publications for him. When I shared that this would be my last working day, he said to visit the office next week so he could introduce me to HR and ask them to assess me for a function. He told me that they always need staff but he was not sure if they were looking for a librarian.

I took his advice and visited the recruitment center. The only exercise they made me do was to write a BASIC program that would multiply the table of 1 to 10. I passed the test and was tasked to work with mainframe computers and assist in programming bank applications. I received training in Cobol and later on, C. I didn't know I had any talent in programming and neither did others who knew me.

Although I think I was good at programming, I also discovered that programming was not my world (Known to me but not to others). I looked for a way out. The Learning and Development Manager found out about my dilemma and he made sure I enlisted for the Information Science program at the *Vrije Universiteit* (Free University) where I could reuse my training from Library College and incorporate new insights, especially to integrate with the soft side or human aspect of information technology. My studies at the Free University were paid for by KPMG but I had to work during the day and study at night and weekends.

I lost my social life entirely, but I loved the work that came with it. In 1978, I graduated and KPMG honored this milestone with more responsibilities, pay, and opportunities in the consultancy division. My first 5 years were filled with attending all the managerial courses KPMG offered on social skills, human resource management,

financial management, and change management. All that I learned and the skills I acquired were proactively applied in different work assignments.

Unknown to me and others

It was some time in 1988-1989 when I learned something new in information sharing: HTTP and Mosaic. This was not something my firm was interested in, a priori, but some IT guys were following this new development too. We shared our knowledge and we saw the potential to improve access to accounting information. We requested seed funding to explore this and, to our surprise, it was granted.

I left for the KPMG Silicon Valley office in Mountain View, where we came up with a business case that was approved internationally. I think, though I have no sources to verify, that in 1993, we built and released one of the world's first corporate Intranets that linked our offices and made accounting literature accessible. The team became much bigger and many firms appointed team members. It was beyond my wildest dreams that we were able to successfully launch this.

I was able to connect and use library and information science expertise to develop a digital workspace to access and organize information assets. It prompted the firm to nominate me as a knowledge manager, a title nobody knew what it really entailed, but which McKinsey introduced as something organizations needed to connect people with content.

I could have easily spent my years at KPMG in upper management roles as KPMG rewarded me in 2003 with a Director position. Just after this, I did something unexpected and not viewed by my family, friends, and colleagues as realistic but I quit my job to do something

unknown by joining the Asian Development Bank in Manila. This meant being far away from my network which impacted my social life and giving up financial and social securities I was used to because of my role in KPMG.

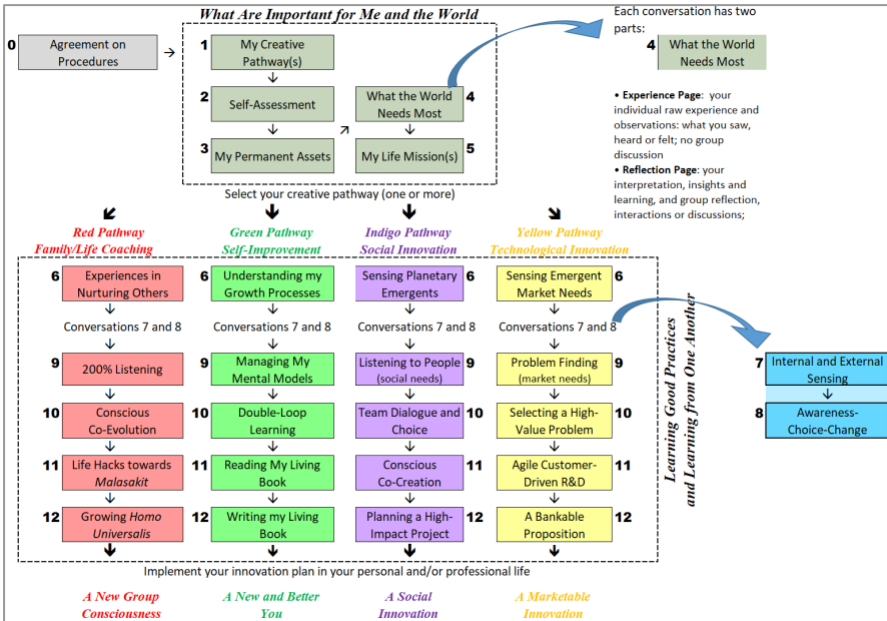
I have come to realize that, more often than not, we find ourselves caged or limited to innovate or explore. Looking back, I was fortunate to have my peer group from high school who recommended to explore library school; the connection I had with the L&D manager at KPMG which led to my stint in KPMG which provided me the opportunity and means to further explore my talents, unknown to me and to others; and joining ADB to start something from scratch in an organization quite skeptical to change.

I have learned that you should explore pathways that come your way. Hopefully, you can be guided on this path by mentors/friends who are brave enough to say things you may not always like to hear, while looking after your welfare. In the end, you have to learn how to appropriate such advice both when you agree with it or when your heart tells you something else.

Your Next Steps

If you've come this far, congratulations! You now have two choices: you can stop here or you can choose to proceed to Stage 2, where you participate and collaborate in an online discussion and sharing with similarly interested readers in exchanging life hacks for pursuing one or more of the four creative pathways. In Figure 6.1 below, you have finished boxes 1-5.

Figure 6.1: The Conversations.



How to Become a Co-Author: Join the Conversation

If you choose to continue, send your intention to info@cclfi.net with the subject heading “Joining next batch.” We recommend using a Google or Gmail account that clearly identifies you in online conversations. Your contribution will be part of the succeeding editions of the book.

The ideal batch size is 30, so if we receive at least 30 expressions of interest, we will start Conversations 6 to 12. Feel free to invite friends and colleagues. While they wait for a batch to fill up, please recommend this book to them.

Conversations 6 to 12 are divided into the four creative pathways that two batches have completed. After a few more batches, we will invite all past and present collaborators to co-author the next book, which will have four major sections corresponding to the four creative pathways. While the current book is about Conversations 1 to 5, the next book will feature the contributions in Conversations 6 to 12.

Whatever your choice, we will be grateful for your feedback, comments, and suggestions for improvement. Email us at info@cclfi.net with the subject heading “Feedback to Stage 1.”

Thank you and may the Force be with you!

The Team Leaders

Teodoro Lloydon Bautista, Red Team Lead

First Creative Pathway of Pro-Creation



I am an educator, researcher, policy adviser, and father. I am currently a faculty and researcher in the Ateneo School of Government. Prior to this, I was the Vice President for academics in a chain of schools offering computer technology and management programs. Furthermore, I was a faculty member at the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) and the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P). I have 15 years of government experience, working in various agencies and positions before deciding to be a policy consultant. My greatest passions in life are running, researching, roaming around the world, and raising my three teenage kids.

Serafin Talisayon, Green Team

Second Creative Pathway of Re-Creation

I am a retired professor but I don't like the word "retired" and so I am now more active than ever before. I provide consulting services in the field of innovation, knowledge management, and personal and organizational learning and change. I love my work because it keeps me learning new things, meeting new



friends, and going to many places. I co-founded a non-profit called Center for Conscious Living Foundation Inc. (CCLFI), as well as its sister for-profit corporation called Community and Corporate Learning for Innovation (also CCLFI). As Director for R&D of CCLFI, I innovate its products and services. CCLFI has been a two-decade journey I have been very happy about.

This collaborative venture is an interesting innovation story in itself; it is still going on. Let us create this story together. I am confident at the end of this effort we will be happy to tell others our team story.

I am a grandfather of five boys. I love them so much and I agonize over the terrible problems in the world. For these two reasons, I wrote a book for them.

Primitivo Mallillin III (Tivo), Yellow Team
Third Creative Pathway of Creation

What gets me up in the morning?

“Dad, it’s time! We’re going to be late!”
Aside from my youngest waking me to bring my kids to school, it’s projects like this where I get to collaborate with a diverse team. Discussions on innovation and KM are like having a hot pandesal with a cuppa coffee!



I’m the Competence Development (CoDe) Manager of Nokia Technology Center, Philippines. My responsibility as CoDe Manager is to organize training. A colleague from twenty years back told me

my job has been automated through Learning Management Systems, but I'd like to think of myself as a coach on steroids, applying new tools and methodologies for learning and development.

Prior to this, I worked for various Project Management Office roles within the region for 10 years. My last assignment was in Nokia Japan in 2015. Innovation, continuous improvement, and knowledge management have always been my areas of interest. I pursued Technology Management Center in UP (UPTMC) where I met Serafin and got introduced to KM. From introducing blogging in the enterprise to ideating personal health management solutions, "m eager to explore and discuss what technology has to offer to make our lives easier. Just this weekend I caught up with a contemporary from UPTM and planned to form Hack4Health, a platform that will solve pressing problems in a medical institution by connecting innovators and applying design thinking.

My current role opened new opportunities for me to learn and practice coaching. I recently attended an NLP program that enables me to better understand the needs of our community based on how they are "programmed" and started to practice techniques to better communicate and connect with them.

I play basketball, am a Netflix series fan and love having debates with my three kids on which generation is way cooler.

Ronald Camit, Yellow Team
Third Creative Pathway of Creation

I am from Imus, Cavite. I'm a graduate of Chemical Engineering and Master of Technology Management (MTM) from UP. I met Serafin in my Knowledge Management course in MTM.



I work as a Project Manager and got my certification (PMP) last 2014. I started my career as a developer. But upon learning about Project Management from MTM and in my company, Deutsche Bank, I decided to pursue Project Management as a career. It was a roller coaster ride. I started managing technical projects and moved to non-technical ones. I plan to improve my Project Management skills in the future and follow the Project Management Institute ladder.

I love to travel. I used to think travelling was an expense, until I realized that I could learn so much by seeing the world, experiencing other cultures, eating their food, and getting lost in strange places. I consider travelling to be an investment now. I don't shop when I travel; I experience life out there.

I have always wanted to earn a Ph.D. and have asked Serafin multiple times to be my referee in my applications. I finally got admitted to UP but I haven't completed it due to work. I plan to teach when I retire, and I believe having a Ph.D. and a vast array of experiences will help me impart more knowledge to my future students. I am not business-minded, but I am trying my best to learn and apply concepts of financial security and diversification of investments.

In the past three years, I put priority on my health. I am not a gym buff, but I watch what I eat and exercise more frequently. I play table tennis. I do regular executive check-ups. I am happy that I have been able to normalize my cholesterol, triglycerides, LDL, HDL and BUN.

I am a proud non-smartphone user! I will buy one when my old Nokia conks out.

Ketema Kebebew Garedeu, Yellow Team

Third Creative Pathway of Creation



I am from Garba Guracha Town, Ethiopia. In addition to my home country, I have had the opportunity to work in Uganda, Bangladesh, and Djibouti where I learned different cultures and ways of life. I have worked as a Statistician and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning (MEAL) and Knowledge Management expert, designing and implementing organizational statistical and MEAL systems for different international organizations like Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Humanity and Inclusion (HI), Save the Children, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). I was also a lecturer of Statistics at Addis Ababa University and Defense University College in Ethiopia.

I have Bachelor and Master's Degrees in Statistics/Bio-Statistics from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. I have a Bachelor of Laws from Haramaya University, Ethiopia, and a KM Practitioner Certificate from CCLFI.

I feel that any movement, conversation and observation is a learning and source of knowledge so that we need to manage this knowledge. Learning should be continuous and systematic for everyone for a better life.

I am eager to learn from interaction of members of this diversified team and contribute my share to the world we want to see. Our globe needs innovation and noble ideas for sustainable development and peace!

Daan Boom, Indigo Team
Fourth Creative Pathway of Co-creation

I am a Dutch national, living intermittently in the Philippines since 2002, when I became Head of Knowledge Management for Asian Development Bank. I met my wife in the Philippines.



I previously held a similar position at the international accounting firm KPMG, starting in the Netherlands, then moving to its research headquarters in Montvale, USA in the '90s. I have retired from ADB but continue to do what I like, which keeps me young: cherry picking knowledge management, learning, and innovation consultancies with development banks and agencies, and recently assisting the African Development Bank in Ivory Coast, West Africa.

I consider myself an academic and knowledge management practitioner but I see my strengths in developing organizational

learning processes (informal and formal) and change management. The latter with regard to the application and use of knowledge — in other words, putting knowledge to work. I see knowledge management and innovation as flip sides of the same coin. They are related but they have different originating roots. I'm convinced that establishing an open culture for knowledge sharing contributes to innovation but there is more to it to make it happen. Innovation can also happen in isolation (the innovation itself) and often requires stubbornness and a lot of passion to explore unconventional pathways and methods to make your case.

During my field work in East Asia I came across a lot of innovations. Some were replicable and others not. Why does an innovation work well in one country but fails in another? The example which comes to mind is the Grameen Bank from Bangladesh. It was tried in Nepal and China but did not work out. Different institutions, networks, and culture require a different approach.

Wangi Mwangi, Indigo Team

Fourth Creative Pathway of Co-creation



I consider myself a global citizen — being Kenyan by birth, but having lived and studied in Australia and the Netherlands in wonderful multicultural environments. My background is in journalism and development studies. My work experience cuts across civil society advocacy movements and international policy and research institutions.

In the past decade, I have worked as an independent development communications consultant, pursuing my passion for supporting development organizations to listen better to the voices of their so-called beneficiaries and ensure that they truly make a difference in the lives of the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups. I travel extensively, reporting at UN negotiations and international conferences. It is another aspect of what I do, providing me great opportunities to see the world and meet kindred spirits from all walks of life.

After 15 years of living in the Netherlands with my family, I decided to relocate to Kenya to better support my parents. It meant splitting my family right down the middle, temporarily, but this is one of those moments where creativity and flexibility (and I daresay innovation!) come to play at the personal level.

Manuel Manuel III (Manny)

Synthesis Team



I am a full-time faculty member at and former College Secretary of the Cesar E.A. Virata School of Business, University of the Philippines, Diliman. I am a graduate of B.S. Computer Science from the University of the Philippines, Los Baños and have two master's degrees from UP — Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Technology Management (MTM). I teach at the graduate and undergraduate levels on courses that include Operations

Management, Management of Innovation, Management of Information Technology, Project Management, and Management Science. I am also a management consultant with the PIMA Foundation, Inc. which is primarily made up of faculty members from the Cesar E.A. Virata School of Business.

I am engaged in training, workshop and seminar facilitation, and management consultancy projects. Some of my recent projects involve business planning and development of commercialization processes for innovative products/services under the National Telehealth Center and Philippine Eye Research Institute of UP Manila, a customer service evaluation and metric development project for a government agency, and a training course on Process Management and Process Improvement in Student Affairs for student affairs practitioners.

I am currently pursuing my Ph.D. in Business Administration in UP and adjusting to being a student again. I love to sing, listen to good music, read books, watch movies, do hosting stints, and spend time with friends.

Ruben D. Canlas Jr (BenC)

Lead Editor

I am an Agile coach, educator, and software developer. When not being the Director for Technology and Pedagogy at CCLFI, I coach software development teams and managers on Agile thinking and practice — *Agile life hacks!* In my spare time, I teach organizational transformation, leadership, and information management courses at the Ateneo Graduate School of Business. I volunteer by giving workshops to government organizations and public schools on the design thinking and the neuroscience of learning. I am also a co-lead for GDG Cloud Manila, a community of practice for Google Cloud Platform users.



In a former life, I ran the MBA program for the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health and produced investigative television shows for the Probe Team. This book was fun for me to edit and design.

I hold a Master of Science in Information Technology from Carnegie Mellon University, an MBA from the Ateneo Graduate School of Business, and a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication from the University of the Philippines.

How We Collaborated on This Book

The following are glimpses of the process the participants went through during the conversations. We share them here to guide aspiring Reader-Authors and show them what to expect.

After an initial website was set up in early November of 2017, a first batch of 23 volunteer collaborators from all over the world agreed to join the online conversations. A second batch of 33 volunteers started on July 2018. The goal of the conversations was to look back to individual experiences, to reflect, and then share these reflections and come up with life hacks that could be shared to the world.

The participants agreed to define a **life hack** as a practice that works based on your and others' personal or professional experiences. A life hack is practical, workable and effective. It is something worth sharing to others or learning from others. It is not a nice quotation that you read, a belief that you were taught, or an advice of a so-called expert; it is something that you have personally experienced as effective and corroborated by others through similar experiences.

Teams were formed to sum up the conversations so far, and at some point, the team leaders decided they had enough material to write an introductory book covering Conversations 1 to 5 for the first two batches of collaborators. This is that book. The team leaders recommended to distribute the book for free to help attract more Reader-Authors to the conversations.

Then, a longer book covering all twelve conversations would be published and sold for a modest price, its proceeds donated to charity.

Self-doubt

Participants early on doubted their ability to contribute to the conversations. They felt they did not have rich experiences to share.

“I am a bit intimidated. I may not come up with anything helpful in this project.” *Mary Ann.*

“What do I have to offer? I’m not technically savvy, or creative.” *Wangu.*

“I am not sure if I should use the mask of professionalism, or Paula herself, to share my mind or to share my heart.” *Paula.*

We addressed these doubts with the following observations:

1. Our life experiences are our truths, our lessons and our undeniable realities. They are truly valuable to us and shareable to those willing to listen and learn.
2. We are all experts because we each know something that others don’t know. Hence, all of us can benefit by sharing.
3. Everything that happens, including mistakes and failures, are opportunities to learn life lessons.

Self-Disclosure and Sharing

Some participants hesitated to share personal stories. Mary Ann said the benefit of sharing is so that others may learn from the stories: “Each advances the growth of everyone.”

There was a note of caution from Chelli: “While some of us here may share the same experiences, the truths gathered from these could be conflicting, depending on the foundations of how the truth was

formed. We should commit to respect the views of others.” Mary Ann advised, “Don’t believe in what you read or heard somebody else say except when it resonates with your own experience.”

A Harvard University research discovered that, on average, people normally devote 30-40% of their conversations to disclosing their own subjective experiences. Their study also underlined the value of self-disclosure.^[10]

Getting to Know Each Other Better

Paula wanted to know more about the collaborators, their backgrounds and interests. This led to the creation of a directory page in our collaboration website where each member described and shared personal information.

Donating the Proceeds

Majority of the participants suggested donating the proceeds of book sales to a worthy cause. Joan Hope and Mary Ann said that giving the book for free would be another way to help the community.

If the book were to be sold, Jocelyn, Ketema, and Wangu suggested making it affordable. Ketema suggested using the proceeds to help in the education and well-being of those who cannot read. “May they be able to read one day and be free of dependence on aid.”

Rommel told a story about a trip to Taipei: “I was in Taipei to attend the Annual World Open Space on Open Space Technology and I

[10] D. I. Tamir and J. P. Mitchell, "Disclosing Information About the Self Is Intrinsically Rewarding", *Proceedings of The National Academy of Sciences* 109, no. 21 (2012): 8038-8043, doi:10.1073/pnas.1202129109.

volunteered the topic on healing our divided planet. I was surprised by the response of many people from different countries. The idea of healing our planet resonated with them. Perhaps we can use some funds to advocate the healing of Marawi as the centerpiece.”

Marawi City in southern Philippines was devastated when the Philippine armed forces razed the city to drive out ISIS militants (May-October 2017).



Photos from Wikimedia Commons

Follow Your Creative Pathway: Pursuing Your Next Life Mission

The practical exercises in this book are about observing, reflecting, and connecting the dots between the big and small patterns in your daily life. The book is divided into Five Questions.

Question One is about your peak life experience, which is that moment in your life when you felt greatest joy, happiness and fulfilment. That moment hides a big message about you. You will discover and be surprised that you have been all the time expressing your own unique creative pathways:

Re-Creating yourself into a new you, such as when you graduated from college, passed the government professional certification examination, or climbed to the top of a mountain.

Pro-Creating or helping another person re-create himself, such as when a mother gives birth, or a father sees his son walk his first steps, or a teacher seeing the happy faces of her students at graduation.

Creating something new whether it's a dream garden, a computer game, or a book of poems.

Co-creating something with others, such as your basketball team winning the championship, your team finishing a worthwhile community service project, or participating in the preparations, practice and performance in a town parade.

This book will help you follow your creative pathways towards your next life mission and help co-create the New Earth.