



I. Welcome and Introductions

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- ~ Conveners' Welcome: Patricia and Craig Neal
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- ~ Questions to Richard
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III. Wisdom Circles: Small Group Topics

- ~ What matters in your life? What reminds you of that?
- ~ Who do you share it with? Who is in your "pod"?

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Principles of Conversation

Listen

with respect for all the voices
without fixing, problem-solving, advice-giving

Speak from Your Own Experience

speak from the "I"
what is on your mind/heart?

Slow Down the Conversation

allow pauses between speakers

Suspend Certainty

notice your assumptions
look for the surprises

Allow Space for Difference

be aware of your judgments
live with the questions and the inquiry



A Poem by Lori Crever

I Have Faith

I have faith
That the world is not
Entirely
Entirely

Dark

Faith that
Indeed
I may be Somebody
 Good
 Virtuous
 Simple
 True

And that I shall leave a mark

Faith in the rain
 Faith in the sky
Faith in the future knowledge
 I can fly

I have faith in my ability
 To not cave in (for too long)
 and grieve
When extraordinary interpersonal relationships
 up and bolt
 without warning
And they are gone

I will not suffer despondency
I will not submit to despair

I have faith that
Some and more and many
Good things will follow as rightly and as simply
And as without warning as the air



CONVERSATION STARTER
Richard Leider

Introduction: Craig Neal

This is the 5th time that Richard is here as a conversation starter. He is also a prolific writer. Richard helped us name the gatherings as Thought Leader Gatherings. He is a leader, mentor, and tour guide to Africa.

Richard led us to Tanzania to meet with some elders. There was a gathering of men, some sitting, and some standing. We spend the balance of the morning of with these Tanzanian elders. It was my first cross-cultural exchange. I got to ask questions about what it meant to be at this place in life. I asked questions and heard answers back.

This is where Richard stands—in a place of wisdom.

Conversation Starter: Richard Leider

Something to Live For: The title that we chose for the book is an accurate description for what I'd like to talk about. To begin, I'd like to talk about Africa. We were with some of the oldest hunter-gatherers in the world. Kampala, about 94-98 years old, is one of the elders of the Hadza tribe. He asked me, "What are the 2 most important dates of your life?" I answered, "Birth and Death." He gave me a look of disgust, like "You're so smart, came over on an airplane, drove up in a fancy Land Rover, you think you know so much..."

His answer for the two most important dates ones life as birth and the day you discover your purpose.

In times of change we go higher and we go deeper. There are many triggers for change, and we always have to ask ourselves, what is certain? What is core? We revisit the constants, the core. Everything revolves around our narrative.

We know that when we get sick, we contract. You have to go inside and use the energy to heal. Then you feel better, you move into the space of healing. But if we get pulled off and don't know where our center is, then the healing takes longer or never is completed.

Places like the TLG remind us of the core. They remind us of the importance of relationships- both with whom we have relationship and the quality of our relationship with our selves. We must be aware of current events, but we must also reach out to the greater world. The saints and sages hold the largest



container and invite us to the whole of the world. When we're contracted and it's just about us, we don't do as well.

THREE POINTS

1. Discovering What Matters

Living in a time of this conversation is no luxury; it's an essential. People ask: isn't this purpose and meaning thing a luxury? It's a survival skill to be able to return to purpose, return to our core. We need to revisit our purpose and passion to renew our contribution to our organizations. It's no luxury. It's absolutely a life skill.

It's no luxury when it comes to health. When people come from illness to a healing, they heal faster and live longer. The purpose project and purpose guild has 3 essentials: Money, Medicine, and Meaning.

Money is obvious, especially now in this environment. It's essential. But if you've got the money, then next is medicine. Medicine is not about drugs; it is your vitality, your energy, your health.

So what's next if you have money and medicine? Meaning- what is your life's work?

People, who don't reinvent themselves when they retire, die. It's the truth. Inner kill is the art of dying without showing it. Dying from the inside—not connected to purpose and the world. It's a drag to work with people who are the walking dead- they are just going through the motions.

Strengthening the core is a survival skill. The media has discounted this information in the past, but now there is science behind this: Met Life has created the Mature Market Institute.¹ You can go there and download tons of great science and analytics.

Over the last 2 years, Met Life conducted did a study based on my work. They took my first books, *Repacking Your Bags For Life*. They interviewed 1001 people about how they would build their own version of the good life in the midst of what's going on right now. The study came out on January 13, 09. The title of the press release: *Meaning Trumps Money For Those Seeking The Good Life*. Discovering what matters: balancing money, medicine, and meaning. It's coming out in the late summer or early fall.

The media can't relegate this subject to religion or other subjects. This is scientific front-page news. It transformed Met Life. In the process of studying others, they started talking to each other about things that matter. Data is only data. Spurring courageous conversation about what matters is what counts.



Community isn't only where we live, its transparency, intimacy, level of connectivity in all systems, family and work. People are starving for real relationships.

At certain points in our life we re-evaluate. Inside all of us we have a core operating system. I'm a technophobe. I will never write on the computer; I prefer to write by hand and I write every day. Much of what I write is not worth anything, but it's a worthy practice.

We all have a core operating system. During times of crisis and uncertainty we need to shut down and reboot. It shouldn't be done in isolation. Going it alone is stupid. If you heal alone, you heal minimally. Self-absorption is not beneficial. You heal more with a pet- something you need to take care of. Saving and savoring self and others is the name of the game in uncertain times. Helping others is healthy.

David Shapiro and I co-authored *something to live for*. He's a philosophy/humanities professor. There is a quote from E. B. White that around which we framed the book:

"If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy. If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem. But I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve (save) the world and a desire to enjoy (savor) the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."

The core of a healthy life is saving and savoring. Saving is our expression in the world. Savoring is internal to us. There are healthy opportunities such as the TLGs that are our call to reboot. It's brilliant. It is no luxury to be here today.

2. Mattering Matters

I reread *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Victor Frankl. He died at the age of 93 nine years ago. He was a Viennese psychologist just before the Nazi came to Vienna. Tilly, his wife, was pregnant, and because their families were in the city, they wouldn't leave. He was in three concentration camps. His pregnant wife, parents and siblings died, but he survived. He was only 87 pounds when he was liberated from Auschwitz, but he came back and reconstructed his life from uncertainty. When he was well enough, he rewrote the book in eight days.

The core manuscript had been written before the war. His wife sewed the manuscript into the lining of his coat to save it, but the coat was confiscated, the manuscript lost. He would steal scraps of paper to write his insights.

Frankl founded Logo Therapy: The last of the human freedoms is choice. It is therapy around meaning. We can choose how to embrace uncertain times. Those who got up in the morning and gave a kind word, a crust of bread, had a vision beyond the concentration camp, were much more likely to live to see the



end of the war and lived to tell the tale. Those without this vision, died more quickly. It's fundamental to our survival and work.

I stand for an annual meaning or purpose checkup. Just like a financial checkup or medical checkup. It's a fundamental human need to revisit, reboot.

My mother died in my arms. I learned more about purpose in that moment than at any other point in my life. Purpose doesn't weigh anything, you can't see it, but it's there. Since telling that story, people all over the world come up to me and tell me their stories of realizing their purpose. Every single human being wants his or her life to make a difference, to matter.

Under the bridge lives a homeless man. Thru CSH, I met a group bioethicists at the U working under a NIH grant. They've been interviewing homeless people, street people, prostitutes, etc. One homeless man said, "When I die I don't want to end up in a dumpster somewhere, unnamed." He carries a slip of paper with his sister's name and number. "I want my ashes to be put in the Mississippi to float down to my sister so that she will know I always loved her."

3. Practices Matter

To reboot, to discover what matters, to feel we matter, we need practices. We take concepts to experience.

Four Essential Practices to Strengthen the Core:

A. Purpose place: where is your listening point? In times of uncertainty, mentally and conceptually, we need to go back to that literal place where we feel whole. The Maasai talk about the grasslands as a place where your soul catches up to your body. My most favorite book of Sigurd Olsen is *Listening Point*. Every one of us needs a listening point to metaphorically or figuratively reboot.

B. Purpose partner/pod: who is your partner(s)? Who are the people you have the conversation with? The TLGs are not only a safe place- you're with people who "get it". Networking is about being cool, having it together, getting something. Gathering is not about being cool; it's about being together. Care versus cure. Interested versus interesting.

One of the most consistent comments we got from *something to live for* is that they want to use this in my pod. So we created a study guide to get a mini gathering going. Who is in your pod? If you have a group, what do you talk about? Strengthen each other's core, so that when we walk away, we feel stronger, not debilitated.

3. Purpose practice: what is one simple ritual you can do every day to remind yourself to walk from the core, talk from the core, live from the core? It can be as simple as a daily mantra. For me, it's the light switch.



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When I wake up I look for the light switch. I flip on the light and it reminds me to ask what the possibilities of the day are. Where can I make a difference today? A kind word, listening. When I turn off the light at the end of the day, it's my ritual accountability. I ask where did I show up today?

The days I showed up unsolicited are the days I feel best about myself. I know that I am working from my core, not from a concept of core. Leaders, coaches and parents are only as good as the practices that galvanize their sense of purpose.

One of them: reboot your own op sys around the galvanizing question of purpose.

4. Purpose/presence: what do you do every day that brings you back to your core? Presence is a reminder that the greatest gift you can give another person is your presence. To their joy, uncertainty, and not have the answers.

Place, partners, practices, presence. There is no other way out of this. If you're rock climbing and stuck, you can't get out of it. You have to get into it. If we can't get out of this, where are you going to go in the world? Get into your own core. Get into it with others.



Questions

1. Doesn't the deepest meaning come from finally entering into the mystery – the not-knowing – of life, rather than trying to find "the answer" to what is my purpose? How can we distinguish ego-based answers to the purpose question from an opening to deeper meaning?
2. What is it like for you to be in your listening place?
3. What practice has been the most helpful to you in the darkest times? How about in the brightest times?
4. Why did you determine you were born?
5. What have you learned about the interrelationship between meaning and money? Where do you find support for practice in a western society that doesn't value it?
6. How do you envision the healing circles spreading throughout the world?
7. Are you more present now during uncertain times? Who are your purpose partners?
8. Why is it so hard for people to identify their purpose, their calling? Is it the capital I? How can we make that simpler – heartfelt? What gives your life meaning? How do you help people decode the Big Question?
9. Is the way, or a way, to save the world, savoring the world? Where do you go to allow and enable your body and mind to catch up with your spirit?
10. Why do adults make this so hard and what might we learn if we listened to the wisdom of kids and youth?
11. What mattered most to you 5/10 years ago? What matters most to you now? Can you imagine what will matter most to you in the future? How might these answers point to a greater understanding of this dilemma?
12. I'd like to tell you my story...will you listen?
13. How did you acquire your patience?
14. Is it possible to create meaning for people in a corporate environment if they don't have the desire to understand their own purpose or how it connects to the organization? How do you do that? Does it matter?
15. How can I best radiate in my workplace the shared philosophy to which you speak today?
16. How do those of us trying to live a life of meaning spark change in those who have forgotten the importance of living meaningfully? Or should we? What aren't more men engaged in these types of conversations?



17. What is the best way to include and engage all of society, the various walks of life in their search for meaning, even though you may not call it that...what would it be called? What would it be called in different languages; different educational levels?
18. What wisdom would you offer to the 20-30 year old group about purpose?
19. How do you stay in a place of mattering matters, when others around you are not and don't think it does?
20. How do you keep your reminders – light switch – fresh? Do you have different pods / people for different parts of core? Or is it important to be in a pod where all core is supported?
21. Medicine < > Meaning < > Money < > Medicine. Why do we have to justify something that makes so much sense -- that is so intuitive?
22. How can we create communities that kindle big visions of meaning, love, and sustainability?
23. How can we help organizations value, invite, hear and listen to the individuals in the organization that can help reboot / focus on the core / heart – even in these difficult times.
24. Please speak to the difference between “working from the core” and “the concept of the core.”
25. How do we savor and/or save the dead people around us? How do we spark life? Or is it our job?
26. Why is this such difficult work? Why don't we care enough about ourselves to live a life of purpose?
27. How do you “get into it” if you are stuck (mountain climbing) in that hopeless place?
28. How do you evaluate success in your purpose if it is dependant upon others perceiving that you made a difference.
29. There is an almost landslide effect when profound ideas, once hidden, become popular with the masses. Suddenly, the idea becomes prevalent on everyone's lips – the latest buzzword, the latest buzz-concept. It seems that this over-exposure has a subversive effect and the idea become empty and meaningless in our consciousness. How can we avert this? In ourselves, in others?
30. How do you deal with times when you realize you have not lived your core purpose and your actions impacted others?
31. If we have to reboot often to restore our core, do we really need to have people to have a listening workout?
32. If purpose and community are life skills, what do you see as the event or events that took us off-course to make it “non-essential” to living? Have you worked with children to introduce purpose to create practices to discover and



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sustain a focus for purpose? Where did you / would you start? How do we move organizations past money to discover medicine (health / vitality) and matter?

33. After you manage to articulate purpose, how do you parlay it into or identify a medium through which to achieve your purpose – identifying a career is where I'm going with this – for maximizing impact?
34. Would you talk about "love" in the context of meaning and purpose? It seems to me that love is the connector between "saving" and "savoring" – that which brings them together into one circle of wholeness, rather than in an "either/or" relationship.
35. How do you reenergize your spirit?
36. At what point do you decide and accept that perhaps the purpose you feel most drawn to is not going to work for you? And how do you let go of that purpose?
37. Do you think searching for meaning will naturally create community? Or is community intentional?
38. How did you find your purpose? Has it changed over the years? What was / describe the second important day – the day you discovered why you were born. Can you live a certain life and still be uncertain?
39. Tell us a story about the day...the second most important day of your life.
40. Healing and community – how can we create communities that are truly healing?
41. What day did you know your purpose? What continues to inspire you?
42. How can I really make a difference in a world that is full of such intense confusion? I want to do my part; it is just so overwhelming right now...
43. Who are you and why are you here?



Richard Responds to the Questions

3 points of synthesis: my story, your story and the story.

My story: I'm 65 and feel more alive than when I did when I was 50. Part of that is because of strengthening the core. I got there from core teachers, so who are your core teachers?

4 words: there was this teacher... who made all of the difference in my life. Turn to the person next to you and tell them who that teacher was who made a difference to you. I have had a lot of teachers along the way.

How do you renew yourself? In Africa, the trip is "back to the rhythm" or core, or land. If you take the word "pod" out and say "tribe" or "path." I want to live in an intergenerational world. There are many shared paths.

Your story: purpose is not a goal. It is a way of being in the world. We need to talk about it because we need a language and to remind ourselves. It is not what purpose says, but what it does. Frankl said we get to a legacy by moment-to-moment decisions. It is a mantra, a practice.

Larry Speers, author of *Servant Leadership*, and I wrote a booklet called *Savoring Life through Servant Leadership* as a free download for the community. Serving is who you want to be and leadership is a role. Frankl says we need to determine our own anthropology. What are we doing here? How'd we get here and where are we going?

You can have a purpose, you can do purpose and you can be on purpose moment to moment to moment. We have it and reminders of it and pretty soon after we do it in practices, we have it in our muscle memory. It is an instinct in that moment. The saints and sages and yogis lived their message. They didn't need words. "They were their message."

It is ultimately about compassion and love. Carl Jung said the greatest damage that you can do to your kids is not living your life. We must be a sharing culture because sharing means survival. The Hadza are a sharing culture. On person eats, everybody eats.



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How do you do this in an organization or family that doesn't get it?

G+P+V=C

Gifts= do you know your gifts (what you're born with)?

Passion= hooking your gifts to something you care about

Values= where you do your gifts and passions intersect? When it is crummy, you bring more of yourself, not less. It will make things happen because you made the choice.

Calling= the inner urge to give our gifts away—don't withhold. You bring more of yourself, not less.

Give thanks for waking up yet another day. This has been the "Gotta Minute" school of career coaching... :-)



30-DAY COMMITMENTS

1. Care enough and believe in myself to bridge to a career / work life that I really want.
2. Intentionally believe that in the next 30 days, all my film interviews and contracts will be signed.
3. Committed to uncovering who I am: my gifts, passions, and values.
4. Wake up.
5. Re-engage with my community, with the people I care about.
6. I want to be committed to the transition to love and compassion.
7. I will ponder my way to be an intergenerational bridge.
8. To keep working my issues.
9. Staying conscious regarding my judgment and criticism of my daughter and stopping to think before I open my mouth.
10. Ask everyday: What part of this day is saving (the world) and what part of this day is savoring (the world)?
11. What practice did I adapt to live a more purposeful life?
12. I want to live out the core formula every day. How have I been living out the core formula?
13. Do my continuing meditation on my walks.
14. Show up in the world each day: Gifts + Passion + Values = Calling.
15. Are you living your calling today?
16. Be present with my husband.
17. Expanding my pod of like-minded individuals, and putting my practices in the forefront of my daily life.
18. Write every day.
19. Live and love unconditionally.
20. Having conversations of meaning with myself, my family, and my colleagues at a minimum of one per day.
21. Communicating G+V+P at the office.
22. Practices with meditation, movement and memoir writing. To listen with meditation, integration with movement, and learning by writing the day's highlights, surprises, challenges, importance, and inspiration to action.



23. Spending more time, energy and curiosity to my pursuit of my purpose and passion.
24. Being myself in each moment. Sitting "with" and fully listening.
25. Delight in and explore my purpose as caregiver for our children and family.
26. To be an improved listener – "listening workouts", hear the story without fixing it.
27. Knowing and identifying my teachers; learning to talk about my purpose (learning the language); understanding those moment-to-moment decisions.
28. Hey! Have you lived your passion this month? Be a transformational leader!
29. Experiencing the energy and excitement that comes from acknowledging my gifts, publicly, out-loud and without fear.
30. I will write for 30 minutes every day.
31. Purpose, practices and presence
32. Listen without judgment; believe that 'I am enough.'
33. Prayer and listening
34. Save and savor every single day; be a ray of love, understanding, and sunshine and hope to myself and to others during these very difficult times.
35. Have a conversation with my family about our purpose and what we can do to support each other.
36. Openness, saying yes, listening, and discovering what matters now.
37. Bring more of myself, not less, to every class I teach.
38. Staying true to my commitment to myself to "take a year off" to explore new career paths and to take at least one half-day each week as Sabbath.
39. Turn the light on every morning to purpose; review how I made a difference in the little moments each day as I turn the light off.
40. Picking and practicing my daily ritual.
41. Identify my "core" teachers.
42. Begin sharing my gift of healing: Invite new clients to my work.
43. Staying awake to putting people first.
44. Going "back to the rhythm," strengthening deep core in Africa.
45. Profound self-care: heart, mind, body.
46. Gifts + Value + Passion = Caring.
47. Reflect on how my gifts have shown up – where my talents manifest – how my passions emerge.



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48. How will you pursue your gifts, passion and values? How will you “show up” and live in the present with love?
49. Further my journey toward a simple, ordered, loving, meaningful and prosperous life.
50. That box of incomplete goodness separated into 17 sections: one section is done. Keep going on the other 16!
51. Listen. Be a joyful presence. Be kind. Be present.
52. Be intentional in building a pod to support my purpose.

RESOURCES

1. Metropolitan Life Mature Institute: www.maturemarketinstitute.com
2. ON ATTITUDE © by Lori Crever ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Special permission granted to Thought Leader Gathering members to print and copy (LC)
3. Center for Spirituality and Healing: www.csh.umn.edu
4. The Purpose Project Guild:
www.csh.umn.edu/programs/The_Purpose_Project/home.html