

The Deliberate Path of the Aspiring Leader

An Exploration Guide



ALEX ROOD
DELIBERATE SELF

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INTRODUCTION

The Deliberate Path of an Aspiring Leader is a three part guide for anyone looking to mindfully approach their own path toward becoming a great leader and a great human being.

A leader can be anyone who is striving to be a more conscious, self-aware, and virtuous person for the sake of their own betterment and the betterment of those with whom they interact. No matter what stage of the adult life, we have the capacity to be great leaders.

The true leader understands that leading takes work. It takes a deliberate approach to understanding ourselves, our processes, and our impact on those around us. It takes intention and practice. It takes failure and reflection.

Coaching and my own development work has taught me that with space, presence, curiosity, compassion, patience and accountability, I can deliberately evolve myself. What I have also learned is that I don't have the answers for you. I write about the things I am working on and the learnings that have resonated with me.

This is not something I can teach you. This is work that you need to intrinsically want for yourself. You need to believe that you have work to do to become a more conscious leader and be willing to take a look at the way you spend your energy to reallocate accordingly.

The Deliberate Path of An Aspiring Leader will be broken down into three parts. Each part will have Exploration Exercises with questions designed to make you question and critically think. There will be space to write but more importantly, freedom to evolve your thoughts over time. This work is not meant to end. This is simply a place to start.

Ready? Let's dive in.

Overview

Part 1 - A Deliberate Analysis of What Has Been

To begin the journey, we have to get an understanding of what has been that got us to where we are. As Jerry Colonna would put it, we will begin with "Radical Self Inquiry."

This is the process of looking within and looking back, in a radically honest and compassionate way. For us to even know where we are or where we're going, we need to really know where we've been, the roles that we've played, and the beliefs and perspectives that guide both our conscious and unconscious ways of being.

Part 2 - A Deliberate Review of What Is

Next, we will focus on self awareness and deeply understanding ourselves, as we exist today. More self-inquiry, more compassion, but this time, more of an awareness on the now.

What are our current values, energy exchanges, and belief systems? How do those components of our life lend to our ability to differentiate from others? This will be the core of the deliberate journey and require us to really take the time to understand ourselves in new ways.

Part 3 - A Deliberate Approach to What is to Come

Finally, with a better grip on what was and what is, we will look ahead at what could be. Regardless of the type of leader we aspire to be, we have to continuously be checking in with a future self.

We are ever-evolving through learnings, lived experiences, earned career capital, and our ability to imagine a future self. We need to make a deliberate effort to stay connected to this future self and stay curious about what forces are behind the wheel of our development.

Dear Aspiring Leader,

Get ready to work. The journey of a deliberate self is challenging, but incredibly fulfilling. I very much appreciate you being here and joining me.

Also, I wanted to be sure to set the right expectations about this guide, before you get started.

This guide is not meant to solve problems or even provide answers. It is not meant to suck and give nothing either. What is important to remember as we go through the steps and deliberate analysis of ourselves is that the work of an aspiring leader is to become better, in some way each day.

We compare ourselves to who we were yesterday and to no one else.

The work is to be intentional about developing awareness and understanding with a radically honest and curious approach, knowing that the effort will be life long but that the foundation is the hardest and naturally, the most important part.

Begin by thinking about how to approach this work. What kind of energy is necessary to give to a deliberate exploration of self and where will that energy come from? Remember, the practice, like anything we try to master, must be deliberate to be effective. That is the ultimate purpose after all: Mastery of Self.

If you want to get great at knowing you, prepare to be present for you.

Thank you for beginning this journey,

Alex



PART 1

A Deliberate Analysis
of What Has Been

What Has Been

Let me begin by thanking you again for taking the first step on this path. The simple desire to deliberately understand yourself better is worth a virtual high-five or thumbs up, so pretend like I just gave you one (Woo hoo! Yea!).

It is important to recognize, again, that this process is meant to be helpful and personal but also difficult. If it were easy, there would be far more conscious, mature adults in this world. It is also meant to be on-going and should be revisited over time as you, your environment, and your situations naturally evolve.

The purpose is to not let life happen to you automatically but instead have you happen to life, deliberately. That is leadership. First of self. Then of others.

Our analysis of what has been will demand the below two key commitments to be effective to keep us grounded in the process:

- Courage to be Honest
- Compassion for Self

We need to understand ourselves better. Plain and simple. Our “selves” are very complex entities that have lived experiences, learned beliefs, values, motivations and fears that make up who we are in this right now, present moment. We cannot understand who we are without a radically honest, yet totally compassionate dive into our past, to make space for the understanding of our experiences and the impactful events of our life.

Once we get a feel for our courage and compassion commitments, we will dive into the process of the work to be done.

Courage to be Honest

This exploration has the capability of evolving us into well-balanced, mature, fulfilled adults. It may also force us to come to terms with shame, toxic relationships, limiting beliefs, and unearth even deeper emotions into our consciousness for necessary processing.

While we shouldn't disregard positive memories in this work, remembering unpleasant events from the past will be absolutely necessary. Harder, of course, but discomfort is the best soil in which to grow.

This may be scary as we excavate the uncomfortable past but ultimately useful, as the fears resulting from those events are stopping us from becoming the leader we aim to be. Voluntarily and most importantly, honestly facing the remembered things we fear or hate is the best way of dealing with them.

It takes some guts for us to relive past self ways of being or ways in which we were treated. The easy route is to simply say “Hakuna Matata” and aim to live worry-free as we look into the future. The option to let our unconscious drive our decisions is always there for us. But we're doing this for a reason. We know we can be better.

The deliberate route accepts the challenge of facing those fears and has us continuously choosing to learn from them. Has us loving ourselves for surviving our past and becoming stronger from what we have been through. The Aspiring Leader is radically honest about who they are and what makes it so. With that honesty, we have the will to face the obstacles of growth with courage and, of course, compassion

Compassion for Self

In 12 Rules for Life, Jordan Peterson explains that we can tell how well we have processed challenging events of our past through a simple exercise of deliberately surfacing the memories of those events. He states that if you recall memories that make you feel ashamed, or guilty, or angry, or hurt, and these memories are more than a year and a half old, then your mind is not at peace, and you are still carrying the weight of your past.

Our minds are likely working unconsciously to ensure that whatever caused these memories doesn't happen again, until we take the time to process.

We need to recognize that this is OK. We are human and we do the best we can to protect ourselves. As we navigate these emotions and better understand their sources, we need to cut ourselves some slack, knowing that it is never too late to do this work and that this work is a life long, arduous process.

Forgive yourself for past mistakes. Surrender to inevitable imperfection. We can love what we have learned and find gratitude for the ability to overcome, grow, and strengthen from obstacles. Compassion for our past selves is foundational to learning from the outcomes and enjoying the process of that learning moving forward.

Could we have done differently? Always.

Is resenting ourselves helping anyone? Never.

The Aspiring Leader will only be able to accept and embrace the flaws of others once they have surrendered to and choose to embrace the flaws they see and feel in themselves.

The Work

Before we begin to develop a framework for our exploration I want to address an elephant in the guide right away. I want to make sure to point out that while I am certainly not a therapist, nor am I trying to be, I do believe that therapy can be very beneficial. Should there be true pain or trauma in our past causing limitations to the way we operate in the world today, the guidance of trained therapy professionals should be considered.

With that said, we will move forward with the intrinsic motivation to deliberately explore ourselves. We are committed to being courageous in the exploration, recognizing the required honesty and inevitable discomfort. We will also give ourselves the gift of self-compassion, knowing in our hearts that we are human beings who have made mistakes and who care enough about growing up to have downloaded this document. We recognize that this is not something that will happen overnight. There is no light switch to reaching mature, conscious adulthood. I promise. I've asked.

This is a process that we have to learn to love. Obstacles that are the way rather than block the way. We must be patient with ourselves and detach from the outcomes we think we want to have happen. The joy is in the journey. Something we will need to focus on throughout is thinking for ourselves. There is no need to share this work with anyone, nor ask for help of any kind. The work is ours alone.

We will write as a deliberate method of thinking for ourselves and really focusing on thinking things through critically. We can evolve our writing over time but it will help to remain mindful of what our initial thoughts were and mindful of our instincts. Perhaps note them as such, as we continue. We write for ourselves and for no one else and therefore open the door for deeply personal content.

Part 1 - Exploration Exercises

We will call our written work throughout this journey “Exploration Exercises.” Each part will have five Exploration Exercises, each with a space to fill in responses. Please feel free to use more space or a separate journaling tool that may be better for you (I journal in Google docs).

For each entry, please allow for as much time as possible. The more time to write and reflect, the more time there is to understand.

Exploration Entry 1

- Who is the person I’ve been all my life?
- What feelings or emotions am I experiencing when thinking about that person?
- What can that person teach me about becoming the leader I want to be?

Exploration Entry 1 (additional space)

Exploration Entry 2

Think of someone(s) that perpetually comes to your mind and causes you sadness or pain.

Write that person/those people a letter, expressing yourself. Say all of the things that need to be said or heard that have not been. Tell them what you wish for. Tell them what you are afraid of. Recognize your role in the sadness or pain that you feel. Write anything else that needs to be written.

Exploration Entry 2 (additional space)

Exploration Entry 3

A healing fantasy is a defense mechanism we have that we tell ourselves because we believe it will make us truly happy one day, should it come true. Look back to the letter you wrote in Exploration Entry 2.

- What is a healing fantasy you have?
- What would it be like for you if you knew for certain that healing fantasy would never come true?
- What roles have I played or filled for others?
- What have those roles helped me learn or accomplish?
- What have those roles kept me from learning or accomplishing?

Exploration Entry 3 (additional space)

Exploration Entry 4

- How did my family of origin show or withhold love?
- What am I most ashamed about regarding my family?
- What did I not get as a child that I am now seeking as an adult?
- How was anger expressed or repressed in my family growing up?
- What was the story my family told about being real, being vulnerable, and being true?

Exploration Entry 4 (additional space)

Exploration Entry 5

- What is the expectation that I have that is most often not met?
- Who or what in my life disappoints me most?
- Describe a time that my heart was broken. How am I still holding that pain?
- After all I have written for Part 1, what have I learned about what makes me who I am?

Exploration Entry 5 (additional space)

Part 1 Recommended Resources

- Reboot - Jerry Colonna
- My Grandmother's Hands - Resmaa Menakem
- Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents - Lindsay Gibson
- It Didn't Start with You - Mark Wolynn
- Self Authoring Online Course - Jordan Peterson

The background of the entire image is a dark, monochromatic photograph of a tree trunk. The bark is highly textured, with deep grooves and ridges, and is centered vertically and horizontally. The lighting is somewhat uneven, with the center of the trunk being slightly brighter than the edges, creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall tone is somber and naturalistic.

PART 2

A Deliberate Review of What Is

What Is

As we begin Part 2, we now understand the value of working through the components of our past that influence our present way of thinking, feeling, and being. We continue to stay mindful that the work we started in Part 1 never ends. There are certainly still questions that need to be asked and thoughts that remain to be uncovered. We will continue to do this work.

As we shift focus to the present self, we recognize that our individual lives are very complex collections of systems that make up the human beings we present to the world each moment of each day. The work to follow can only be successful with a continued, deliberate integration of the work that we have been doing to analyze our past.

In this section, the exploration will begin to integrate the present self. Who are we? What motivates us to do the things we do? What beliefs do we have and how do they impact the various components of our life? What values do we live by? What is the reason we live by these values?

Much like we did previously, our analysis of "what is" will demand two key commitments to be effective to keep us grounded in the process:

- Remain Curious
- Make time for Reflection

We cannot expect to lead others unless we know and understand the people we wish to lead. We cannot know and understand others unless we know and understand ourselves. It's a simple formula. Curiosity plus reflection, equals understanding. And understanding is essential to leadership.

Remain Curious

It is important to highlight that understanding ourselves can be especially difficult for those of us who didn't grow up valuing self awareness and curiosity. Difficult for those of us who didn't know what looking in the mirror was really all about. Speaking personally, I spent a majority of life looking in the mirror for far healthier reasons than I'd like to admit.

The typical adult operates according to some societal or cultural script. My script was to be a respectful, well-mannered, well-presented, and caring son/older brother. I was to get good grades in school, go to a good college, get a good job, find a wife, have kids, and turn into a good father. Clearly there are a lot more narratives within that script that I am sure others could very easily add in, without even knowing me. Follow blindly. Life will be good.

The truth, however, is that the scripts we live inherently dissuade us from questioning ourselves because we risk judgement from those who expect us to follow said script. If we question our scripts, we subject ourselves to conflict, misunderstanding, and what could turn into a very different life than the one we had been preparing to live. We often fear what is different. Even worse, those closest to us tend to be the ones who most misunderstand and judge that difference. The path of differentiation can be lonely, but is an essential part of growing up.

Due to the obvious inconveniences this may cause, the majority of scripts go unconsciously followed. Our work, as Aspiring Leaders, is to question the scripts, the common sense, the cultural norms, and the things we "know". Do they serve our growth process? Do they fit into our integrity? Curiosity is an essential skill in the ongoing work to ask ourselves the right questions and seek the best answers.

Make Time for Reflection

Asking all of these questions of ourselves and the systems in which we live and operate is a vital start but we also need to know what to do with the answers. As we reflect on these questions, we need to recognize that any number of answers may arise. Many different answers to the same questions, even. And that is ok. In fact, the broadening of potential perspectives is the process of attaining wisdom.

The point here is to establish a deliberate approach to the reflection of possibilities that could be the reasons behind what causes us to be the way we are. To work on this reflection process, we will be focused on "what-based" questions instead of the more popular "why?". It is easy to rationalize any way of being or value held or action taken. What we want to do is explore the actual things that cause those values, actions, or beings to happen.

For example, I am a people pleaser and have a hard time saying no. A basic "why" could be that I don't want people to be upset and me being slightly inconvenienced is better than screwing up someone else's day. Makes sense, but it's too rationalize-able.

A more in-depth "what-based" analysis would reflect on the actual reasons and things in my life that have led me to believe that me saying no would even bother the person. Perhaps I had gotten fired for saying no in the past. Perhaps I had a codependent relationship with my mother. Perhaps both of those things along with other compounding, character-forming events are the reason I struggle with boundaries. What, specifically, has caused me to be the way I am?

The only way to understand better is to allow for those answers to come up during time dedicated to reflection.

The Work

What we are working on here is certainly not a quick fix to self-awareness. Self-awareness is an on-going, life long work that requires continuous curiosity and reflection. It can happen as a result of a moment that just passed or from breaking down an experience days, weeks, months, or years ago. It is a skill that needs to be deliberately practiced over time.

Self-awareness is an essential part of the true path to integrity and building character. No exceptions. As we are already on page 24 of this guide, the belief is that we are aligned on these values and are mutually committed to pursuing them in such a way that respects the slow, meticulous effort necessary.

Here is the reality: The fastest way to the top won't keep you there. People who shortchange their internal character inevitably fall. And when they do, it's always a long drop back to the bottom – and a much steeper climb the second time around.

If we want to get to the top and stay there, the key is integrity and self-awareness to keep that integrity. Sure, it takes time, and it often feels like an unnoticed effort, but be patient, it will pay off. Integrity means living a whole and undivided life.

Let's do some Exploration Exercises to see how whole our current lives are.

Remember, the purpose here is to think for ourselves and be as honest and personal as possible. This is for you and only for you as the deepening of your understanding of self is the core of self awareness. It cannot be done quickly and should be revisited regularly over time.

Part 2 - Exploration Exercises

Again, we call our written work throughout this journey “Exploration Exercises.” Each Exploration Exercise will have space to fill in responses, but please feel free to use whatever journaling tool makes the most sense for you. For each entry, please allow for as much time as possible. The more time to write and reflect, the more time there is to understand.

Note: Exploration Exercises 3-5 below are derivations of Lisa Lahey and Robert Kegan’s work on our Immunities to Change. Please feel free to explore and reference their work in more detail while doing those exercises.

Exploration Exercise 1

- What role does my image and the way I believe others see me play in my life?
- What is something about me that I deliberately hide?
- What is something about me that most people think they know, but that may not be true?
- What am I running from and where am I running to?

Exploration Exercise 1 (additional space)

Exploration Exercise 2

- Where in my life do I put energy toward something that I wish I didn't?
- What activities in my life give me energy?
- What activities in my life consume my energy without giving any back?
- What am I saying no to?
- What am I not saying no to that I should be?

Exploration Exercise 2 (additional space)

Exploration Exercise 3

What is a self-improvement goal I can set that I believe will make me a better person? (Something with significant payoff and that I know I will be motivated to achieve.)

Identify specific, concrete behaviors that will be required to achieve that goal.

Exploration Exercise 3 (additional space)

Exploration Exercise 4

What behaviors do I exhibit that prevent me from achieving my self-improvement goal from Exercise 3?

What “competing commitments” do I have that cause these behaviors to exist and hold me back from reaching my goal? (These are typically rooted in the fears that arise when we think about what not having those behaviors would mean.)

Exploration Exercise 4 (additional space)

Exploration Exercise 5

What assumptions do I have that may be causing the behaviors identified in Exercise 4 to exist and thus are keeping me from reaching my goal?

How could I test to see if those assumptions are actually true? Am I willing to try?

What have I learned about myself as the person I am today?

Exploration Exercise 5 (additional space)

Part 2 - Recommended Resources

- An Everyone Culture - Lisa Lahey and Robert Keegan
- Dare to Lead - Brene Brown
- Stillness is the Key - Ryan Holiday
- Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck - Mark Manson
- Flow - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi



PART 3

A Deliberate Approach
of What Is to Come

What is to Come

You made it! Made it where, you ask? To the final part of this guide, of course! In all honesty, it's really just another place along the learning journey that you will want to revisit over and over again during the course of your life. Either way, hooray for you!

I appreciate you sticking with this and getting to the last part of our journey together. I truly hope that you have found the deliberate exploration of yourself valuable. As you may have gathered by now, these three parts of the Deliberate Path of An Aspiring Leader are not necessarily sequential. This means we should be constantly interchanging our focus on our past, current, and future selves as a way of maintaining wholeness in our self-awareness process.

As we look forward to what is to come, we begin to establish a relationship with our future self. Looking forward demands that we look back and within to give ourselves the best chance of making it to a place we think our future self may want to be. Our future self, in turn, should always be taking into account the ongoing analysis we've done to better understand our upbringing, culture, beliefs, and defaults. This is one of the most valuable relationships we can develop.

In this our final approach to what will be, our work will demand two key commitments to be effective to keep us grounded in the process:

- Understand our Ego
- Allow Imagination

We recognize the forces and systems impacting our current ways of thinking and being and deliberately choose where to build and where to let go.

Understand our Ego

We often find ourselves looking out into the world for some model of what we hope to become. It isn't our fault, this is a natural, human approach to goals and desires. How many children want to be just like their mom and dad when they grow up? Or even more commonly, how many kids want to be just like those people their Mom and Dad told them to be growing up (doctors, lawyers, bankers, Meryl Streep, LeBron James, etc).

Looking at our own paths forward, as Aspiring Leaders, we must be aware of how we have come to identify with leadership, with success, and with status. In this guide, we have done and will continue to do a lot of work on our makeup, our beliefs, our values and on our self-awareness. Now we need to explore our identity and deliberately dissect the way in which we attach the way we see ourselves today to the person we are working to become in the future.

What things are we pursuing, and what is driving that pursuit? How do we view ourselves in relation to others and what generates that perception? How do we view ourselves in relation to a potential self that we strive to become or fear becoming?

We inevitably set standards for ourselves with some need to be better than, more than, recognized for, that extend far past any reasonable utility. This is where a relationship with our Ego becomes necessary to establish and strengthen.

Understanding the impact of our Ego is core to the relationship we will have with our future self. A healthy relationship with our Ego allows us to stay objective and remove our self interest in our pursuit of future self goals. Left unchecked, however, our Ego can be catastrophic to maturation and growing up.

Allow for Imagination

One thing our Egos absolutely love to do is make sense or meaning of something. Since the unknown is a natural threat to self, and the Ego's role is to protect that self, the Ego functions in such a way that can limit our ability to imagine possibilities. Ego naturally generates the appropriate fears and takes past events to effectively close loops on potential outcomes. We need to know. We need to be sure. Our safety and lives depend on it!

Knowing and certainty are natural Ego defenses that actually do have their evolutionary benefits. Yet, for us Aspiring Leaders, we need to wrestle with our Ego and choose to surrender to the uncertainty that is our future. Many will call this “Ego death”. Go with this term if it helps but what we are essentially doing is recognizing that no matter how much we try to make meaning of something, the potential of that meaning not coming to fruition is always a possibility.

No matter how much we try to predict, plan, prepare, or project, there is always a chance it will be for nothing and something very different or unexpected will occur.

Our imaginations keep us open to believing that the best (and worst) things we dream about for ourselves are possible. It allows us to pursue work that is in service of reaching those “best” things, even if the immediate benefit isn't certain. Our deliberate paths of practicing, of process, of growth, will be the constants. We learn best from the chaos of uncertainty.

The open-minded approach to infinite possibility of our future makes what we can control in the present all the more important to understand. With a deliberate approach to knowing ourselves and the critical thinking necessary to evolve as mature, mindful adults, we give ourselves a chance to become the leaders we aspire to be.

The Work

The best gift we can give our future selves is our presence containing an imagination that is open to us flourishing at any point in our lives. We should be exploring the future with a surrender to the very real fact that we have absolutely no idea what will happen to us. The relationship we have with our future selves, therefore, is not finite.

We have already done the work on this path to explore our expectations and from where they come. We must continually analyze the source of those expectations as Ego-driven mechanisms, designed to protect us from what we don't want to realize as inevitable uncertainty. There is freedom in detaching from the outcomes of the future, in pursuit of growth and development today. This opens the door for our future selves to simply be a better, more mature version of who we are right now.

One thing to consider is that the commitments we are making to that maturation process today should be in a direction toward our best guess at what our future self's values may be. This becomes a bit easier if those values allow us to pursue the commitments we make with integrity, for our own betterment, and for the betterment of those around us.

This is why the processes of thinking for ourselves and developing trust in our pursuit of undivided wholeness as people are essential. It will be in these the processes that we deliberately determine where we need to dedicate the necessary energy for the flourishing future self we all strive to work toward.

Part 3 - Exploration Exercises

Finally, we reach our last set of “Exploration Exercises.” Per usual, each Exploration Exercise will have a space to fill in responses, but please feel free to use whatever journaling tool makes the most sense for you. For each entry, please allow for as much time as possible. The more time to write and reflect, the more time there is to understand.

You will notice that some of the below Exploration Exercises are evolved from those you have done already. Feel free to leverage the thinking you have already done as you think deeper.

Exploration Exercise 1

- Who is the person I am working to become?
- What feelings or emotions am I experiencing when thinking about that person?
- What am I doing to become that person?
- What can that person teach me about becoming the leader I want to be?

Exploration Exercise 1 (additional space)

Exploration Exercise 2

From Exploration Exercises 3-5 in Part 2, you had come up with a goal for self improvement and some behaviors/assumptions keeping you from that goal.

- If I were to achieve that goal and overcome the beliefs and assumptions keeping you from it, what kind of person would I be?
- How would I be different than who I am today?
- What would be the next goal I set for that person to improve their lives?

Exploration Exercise 2 (additional space)

Exploration Exercise 3

- What is something I want for myself professionally?
- What role does my Ego play in that professional desire?
- If I had nothing holding me back, what will I be doing in 5 years?
- What is holding me back?
- What have I already attained that will help me get where I want to be?
- What can I be doing differently to be on a more deliberate path toward my desired professional place?

Exploration Exercise 3 (additional space)

Exploration Exercise 4

- Where does self care (exercise, eating well, relaxation, hobbies, etc) fall on my priority list?
- Asking my future self, five years from now, what they wished I did more of between now and then, what would they say?
- What role does stress and anxiety play in my life?
- Where does my Ego's need to feel important most stand out?

Exploration Exercise 4 (additional space)

Exploration Exercise 5

- Where is my energy currently being wasted today?
- If I had that energy back, what is one thing to which my future self would appreciate me reallocating it?
- If I did that thing consistently for the next 5 years, what would I have?
- Are there any other things I may want to consider reallocating wasted energy toward?
- What have I learned about what I want for my future self?

Exploration Exercise 5 (additional space)

Part 3 - Recommended Resources:

- So Good They Can't Ignore You - Cal Newport
- 12 Rules for Life - Jordan Peterson
- Ego is the Enemy - Ryan Holiday
- Mastery - Robert Greene
- This Could Be Our Future - Yancy Strickler

THANK YOU

My appreciation for the work you have done here cannot be understated.

Thank you for being deliberate about growth and joining me on this path. Regardless of the impact this exploration guide may have had, the simple pursuit of anything to aid in our development journey shows the intention necessary to become a great leader. Making the ongoing choice of meaning over expedience, of integrity over image, of curiosity over complacency, this is what leadership requires.

These three parts of the path of an aspiring leader should be used however we feel is best fitting for our lives, at any given part of it. The important, overarching intention is that we are aware enough of ourselves as they exist in the ever-changing contexts in which we live. Each of us will have a different approach to our first job than we do to raising our first child or starting our first business.

Our abilities to remain authentic, build character, ask with courage, seek understanding, and manage how we use our energy (among many other abilities honed by a deliberate approach to life) will allow us to face each challenge with integrity. If you feel connected to this work and would like to sign up for the newsletter, work together, or go deeper into the deliberate path of a leader with me, please connect with me [here](#).

“An unintentional life accepts everything and does nothing. An intentional life embraces only the things that will add to the mission of significance.” - John C. Maxwell.

Stay humble, stay patient, and stay deliberate.

Until next time,
Alex