

Discover Your Purpose

How to Use the Five Life Purpose Profiles to Unlock Your Hidden
Potential and Live the Life You Were Meant to Live

Rhys Thomas

JEREMY P. TARCHER/PENGUIN

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Chapter 4

Beliefs, Wounds, and Vows

Did you ever have the experience as a child of wanting to share, do, or express something important to you, but one of your siblings poked fun at you or a parent judged it as bad or stupid? All that energy that wanted to share a deep inner truth and enthusiasm for life got negated, so it hurt deeply in your heart. You may have wanted to do something as simple as sing a song or show everyone a picture you drew, but it was a deep part of you that you wanted to share, and you got shot down. At that point, you may have consciously or unconsciously decided that you would never put yourself out there like that again. Then, later in your teenage years and adult life, you may have found yourself paralyzed or tongue tied at moments but didn't really know why. You are an adult, you have something important to say, something close to your heart and mind, but, all of a sudden, access to expressing it seems cut off.

Even more mysterious, your passion and confidence have totally evaporated, leaving you doubting that what you had to say was even important in the first place. Each time this happens you move further away from having the power to express yourself and act, until, at some point, you give up, play small, and no longer even try.

This puzzling predicament is not unusual—we all experience not being able to speak or act on our deepest truth in certain situations—usually the ones that really matter! In this chapter, I will show you how your beliefs—especially those super-beliefs I refer to as your *vows*—became hardwired long ago as mental constructs that prevent you from expressing your unique life purpose. It is only when you uncover the truth behind your vows that you can call back the energy you repressed so long ago. Only

then can you gain the freedom to make conscious choices and act courageously in alignment with who you are and fulfill your life purpose.

The energy you need to live your life purpose is not based on how fit you are or how energetic you feel. Having stamina is helpful, but plenty of people who are in great shape have no clue about their lives or deeper life purpose. The energy you need to live your life purpose comes from a much deeper channel in which you fearlessly challenge limiting beliefs and life patterns based on self-rejection and stand up once again for your highest truth.

Belief and Identity

All of your experiences in life are filtered through your beliefs. It's not so much events that shape your experience as it is how you interpret, analyze, and evaluate those events.

The most powerful of all your beliefs are those that define who you are. As an infant, you felt the world and experienced yourself as a flow of energy rather than as a person. But almost from the moment of your birth, adults tried to hook your attention away from your flowing, formless world and get you into their world of rules and structures and labeling to make the world solid, controllable, and predicable. At a young age you had to give up the feeling of who you are and begin to define yourself so you could be like everyone else. If you stayed in the no-form world too long, your parents and doctors would treat you like you were ill or mentally slow.

By necessity you needed to put your analytic mind in hyper drive to match your parents' notions about what is real and what is not. You came to see yourself as solid, predictable, and separate from everything and everyone else in your surrounding world, just like Mom and Dad. You learned the family language that turned the flowing unified universe and the flowing unified soul self into static and solid and separate entities.

By the time you became an adult you were isolated, wandering through a world of objects, each one defined not by what it is but by how it is different and separate from you or by how the world has labeled or judged it. In these strange mental gymnastics, your experience of what is outside of you tells you more about what you are than your internal guidance and knowing. Your worldview has defined you by *what you are not* rather than who you are.

The more you created beliefs based on evidence and mental experiences in your life, the more you defined your world as solid, separate, and therefore “real.” You told yourself a story, based on the thinking function of your brain, to bring solidity and certainty along with the illusion of permanence to your life. In that way, you avoided the fear that goes with living in an uncertain world, in an impermanent body. You labeled the world in a way that let you know that it and your part in it were safe and secure, just like everyone else did.

But I want to challenge this very fundamental belief about who you are. If you take a few deep breaths and feel who you are—do not *think* who you are—you will experience yourself as someone more *non-solid* than solid. Your body appears to have a solid, separate form, but according to modern science, even that physical part of you is continually changing, making you a part of a universe that has never been the same twice. At the quantum level, looking at the energies that make up your very molecules, there are no particles that are the same as they were even one minute ago!

In that light, it seems the only thing about you that is solid and separate is your rigid beliefs and your thinking mind’s memory of who you are. To be experienced accurately, your true self must be felt as fresh and new in each moment, like an infant in the ecstasy of playfully being alive. Such felt awareness brings you to what is not solid but formless and flowing, touching on your true identity which is made up of your *core soul* profile qualities as expressed through your unique profile. It is those core soul qualities that give you a purpose for the form you take in any moment, whether you are *creating*, *feeling*, *caretaking*, *leading*, or *achieving*.

In summary, who you believe you are defines the world that you experience. Your beliefs establish

a solid and dependable self, but the limit who you are in life and the choices you make. This is why it is so important to know who you are at the deepest level of what you're here in life to be and do.

If you don't know who you are, believing instead that you are someone you are not, you create a fake life and purpose that invariably feels lost or unsure, as well as a world you don't fit into. Deep down inside, you know that you are being who you are supposed to be rather than who you really are, so that triggers great fear that forces you always to struggle to survive, to "make it." If you know who you are as a soul, you see that everything happening to you has purpose and meaning, and you live in peace and harmony with yourself and the world, never feeling forced to change a single thing.

The Rhys Method Life Purpose Profile System makes it possible for you to see what has always been your authentic soul self. Through the study of the five Life Purpose Profiles, you are able to create a dynamic self-awareness and soul identity that is far more powerful than anything you've ever thought or believed to be the truth. You will know yourself in a profoundly new way.

Vows: The King of Beliefs

Some beliefs about who you are go deeper than others, especially those formed out of fear and defense when you felt that your identity was threatened. I call such powerful super-beliefs *vows*. Vows are beliefs that went so deep that they become hardwired and nonnegotiable, and preventing you from living your life purpose.

The term *vow* typically refers to a sacred promise—one to be taken seriously as in a marriage vow or a spiritual/religious commitment. A vow is something you adhere to, even worship as something greater than yourself and your ordinary needs. The kind of vows I'm referring to are indeed sacred promises, but not the kind that are made from your free choice or for your greater benefit. Rather, vows are those promises you made to yourself long ago in order to be safe. In other words, your vows, similar

to beliefs, keep you trapped, but the prison of the vow is deeply unconscious and therefore beyond your ability to escape. Even worse, you cannot examine your vows, only see them by the impact they have in your life.

At their most basic level, vows guarantee that you react automatically to flee from danger, which would be a good thing if you were being charged by a grizzly bear. In that instance, the vow is: *I will always seek safety when threatened violently!* But other kinds of vows, while they are meant to protect, actually cause us to reject some aspect of ourselves because that aspect was not recognized, or worse, it was rejected by another.

These deeper, more complex kinds of vows determine your personal identity and mentally created life purpose. They are harder to trace in their origins but occur just as automatically as your reactions to immediate danger. Fleeing a charging bear involves your entire autonomic nervous system, not just your rational and conscious mind, and it is the same with a vow you made at a young age to protect yourself from rejection or abandonment. As an infant, you could not tell the difference between a dangerous animal and an angry parent who hurt you and then ignored your needs—both threatened your survival. Vows, regardless of their content, get lodged in your unconscious mind, and you don't get a chance to consider their value. They run your life.

Not all vows are so dramatic, but they can still be as lethal in their impact on your life. A vow can be as simple as telling yourself that you will always be polite and nice. As a belief, you consciously decide that never being angry at people is a better choice than being rude or aggressive. But if you vowed always to be polite, you find yourself being nice automatically and holding back your anger, not responding authentically even if you are clearly being abused by another. These are the kinds of vows that steal your power, making it impossible to act in a healthy way.

Certain news events demonstrate the power of vows over any rational conscious choice. Religious zealots who become terrorists or kill doctors at abortion clinics are willing to sacrifice themselves and kill others in the name of their vow. These are extreme examples, but every vow you make, regardless of

the outcome, generates the same level of unconscious conviction that these zealots and terrorists exhibit.

The vow to be nice and polite is laid down in your body-mind with the same amount of force and energy as the vow to die a martyr, causing endless harm. Vows are *always* and *never* statements. You may have vowed, *I will never be as abusive as my father was and hurt other people*. Or the opposite: *I will always love and care for my family, like my grandmother did when she took us in*. These kinds of “nice” vows make you a slave to an ideal and prevent you from showing compassion to yourself when you need it. Such an idealistic vow leaves you feeling like you are never good enough as a parent, never measuring up. At the same time, you stand in righteous condemnation of parents who are strict or assertive with their children.

Simple vows about being good or not being bad start out innocently, but soon they snowball, growing in size and impact to determine your every decision throughout your entire life. Your vows may not lead you to kill other people, but they kill *you*—your true self—paralyzing you when you need to express yourself or act from a sense of your true mission. They force you to judge others who exhibit the traits you’ve rejected in yourself. You move farther and farther away from your true self and the energy you need to live your life purpose. Your actions may not make the evening news, but they can wreak havoc in your life and in the lives of those you know, causing just as much violence as the terrorists and bombers we read about.

Vowing Against Your Truth

Even though vows look like you are choosing to be good, they are actually your unconscious choices not to be *you*. Because vows are always against your true self, there are no good vows.

For example, if you vowed to be like your grandmother who was always warm, giving, and selfless, then you deny your own needs and take care of others first in moments when you really need to

take care of yourself. Furthermore, your vow to be one way or another doesn't necessarily relate to the actual situation in which you made the vow. Your grandmother who appeared selfless may have taken lots of time for herself, but you never noticed that. Instead, you fixated on her "always" being giving and selfless, creating an impossible ideal that made your selfishness sting. In essence, you created a perfect snapshot of how life should be, which stands in opposition to who you really are.

Setting an ideal that you can never live up to, even on your best day, demands that you use all of your energy to be that ideal while ultimately failing. Yet you have to appear "good" all the time, driven by your vow and hiding from the fact that you are a phony at some level. Living someone else's life, or half of your life, is never going to make you happy, no matter how wonderful that life may seem. You need to find your own unique life purpose hiding behind your vows to be whole and fulfilled. Nothing else will suffice.

Vows become the "nonnegotiables" in life, reigning over all your beliefs as unquestionable truths. Every time you say, *This is just the way the world is!* you are referencing a deeply held vow and lie. Beliefs, on the other hand, are cognitive and can be challenged when circumstances clearly do not support them. A vow doesn't get cognized or even *re*-cognized, sneaking past any rational process of your thinking mind before becoming real in your feelings, thoughts and actions. A vow is fashioned as the truth of *who you are and what the world is*, and unless you become conscious of the vows you've made and release that energy, they negate in you.

Core Wounds and Vows

In childhood, your unique core profile qualities—what makes you who you are—were rarely seen, heard, or understood by your parents or guardians. From such ignorance or even outright rejection of your deepest self-expression, you became wounded at your very core. In your wounded state, you

vowed against the core qualities that they denied, making a promise to yourself that only the opposite qualities would thrive.

It is this basic inability of a parent to see, hear, or understand the true nature of their children that forms the core wound for every human being. We all suffer not from specific traumas, as psychologists would have us believe, but rather from something far deeper and more common: the realization that who we are in our very souls is not welcomed by those who care the most for us and unconsciously want us to be more like them than ourselves. You may have escaped specific traumas in your childhood, but none of us escaped this universally human experience.

In his book *The Four Agreements*, Don Miguel Ruiz calls this process “human domestication,” referring to how a child’s true self is bred out and eliminated through repeated rejection of undesirable traits and affirmation of accepted traits. Those traits that elicit love and approval are vowed *for* (“I’ll always be quiet and polite when an authority is correcting me”) and those that don’t are vowed *against* (“I’ll never talk back to an authority”). Even early in the game, a good portion of your core self is left behind. The truth is that you need to speak when judged and that if you don’t challenge authority you live the life of a lemming.

Every time a child chooses the approval and love of their parent over his or her own truth and integrity, a vow is made. To a child, it’s a life-or-death choice—his or her very survival seems to be at stake because the attention and love of adults is what the child cherishes most. These kinds of early vows are often made in the first two to three years of life at a time when life is a full-body, energetic experience rather than a mental or cognitive one. For a young child, painful events are absorbed into their very sense of self.

In response to early wounding experiences, each of us reacts in a way that is specific to our unique profile in life. When wounded, the Creative Idealist will retreat, run away, or dissociate; the Charismatic Leader–Charmer will stay and manipulate or fight; the Knowledgeable Achiever will manage himself internally to figure out how to be successful and good; the Team Player will comply and put up with it;

and the Emotional Intelligence Specialist will get overwhelmed and cry. These responses are hardwired into your nervous system, leading you to make vows that specifically hide your core profile qualities, creating beliefs about yourself and the world.

Once you vow, consciously or unconsciously, to see some part of yourself as bad or good, you set up the *always* or *never* knee-jerk responses that drastically limit the pleasure you can experience in life. Vows always carry heavy doses of shame and guilt about that part of yourself needing to be rejected. Then add the fear that goes with hiding and you have the perfect storm that creates a vow.

Later in life, when you stand up and choose to put yourself first, you feel the guilt and shame that you felt as a child. So you will need to get used to working through guilt and shame if you are going to challenge your vows and take back the energy you lost because of them.

Vow patterns begin a domino effect of self-misunderstanding and trigger thousands of false beliefs about who you are and what your purpose is in life. All future choices, beliefs, and vows must honor your original vow in order to be acceptable. Vows are the antithesis of freedom, always going against anything that is part of your true core self. Vows seem to be your free choice, but that freedom of choice is an illusion. Your choices in jobs, relationships, and who you allow yourself to be seen as are all set in stone, and you cannot go against them without feeling like a bad person, full of guilt, shame, self-hatred, and isolation.

Polarizing Effect of Vows

Vows always lead to inner conflict because when you live from a vow, every event becomes polarized as either *good* or *bad*. Vows don't let you see your wholeness but instead force you to live in judgment of yourself, preventing you from experiencing the full range of your human qualities. This polarizing effect is the source of so much of the pain and suffering you experience in life.

Any personal crises you experience, whether it's a midlife crisis or a mental or physical health crisis, comes straight from the buildup of hardwired vows you've been living by and see no way to change. In energy medicine, we have discovered that almost every form of illness or relationship problem can be mapped back to a rejection of the true self. You've tried running away or impulsively rearranging people and circumstances in your life but still you are trapped. That is because regaining your freedom is not a matter of escaping or making big changes to your outer circumstances. In fact, your freedom has absolutely nothing to do with what is going on around you—the people, the circumstances, the events you may point to and blame—but rather everything to do with what is going on inside you: your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs all sourcing from invisible vows.

As you read about each Rhys Method Life Purpose Profile in Part III, you will see that a person's vows are directly related to the core soul quality of the particular Life Purpose Profile. Those qualities include both the positive and negative sides of your individual traits, which explain how you can vow *for* or *against* (in *always* and *never* statements) and still reject your true self. The sensitive Emotional Intelligence Specialist child may vow never to feel, the giving Team Player child may vow never to be humiliated again by being too nice, the super-performing Knowledgeable Achiever child may vow never to be fully satisfied with achievements in life, the strong leader child may vow to fight authority rather than become one, and the Intelligent Creative child may vow to keep her ideas to herself.

The rejection of your core soul qualities creates far-reaching, devastating internal conflicts, so that your strongest vows and supporting beliefs block you from living your purpose and being your true self, both internally and externally.

Every powerful structure has its weak point, and a vow's weakness is revealed when you begin to choose those qualities that are inherent to your soul, not your defended self. Just as Superman, the Man of Steel, lost his strength and helplessly flopped to the floor in the presence of Kryptonite, your vows lose their strength when in the presence of your authentic, core soul profile self.

Your core soul self, as identified in your unique profile, existed before your vows were made, and

thus has roots far deeper than any beliefs, no matter how hardwired they may seem. The feelings you have when the crystal bowls are intoned or when you are in your childhood “secret place” are your vows’ Kryptonite. Vows say *no* to life and pull you back through self-rejection, while your soul says *yes* to life and is felt as a deep calling and self-acceptance.

Simply seeing yourself and others clearly, not through the lens of your fear-based beliefs and vows, allows you to know your true place in the world and be empowered to do what you are here to do. From that grounded place, you begin to rebuild your life, attracting to you people and events that support your life purpose rather than your fears, beliefs, and vows. A new kind of snowball effect starts working for you rather than against you, and an entirely new way of life opens up.

The good news is this: if you are defined by what you have rejected in yourself, then what you have rejected is exactly what must be restored so you can know and be fully who you are. This is the secret gift of vows: in hiding who you are, they are your most valuable clues to your true identity and your life purpose. Uncovering them is the important work you will do in the Life Purpose Profile Program in Part III.

What’s Next . . .

In Chapter 5, you will see how vows polarize your higher- and lower-self traits to create your profile’s defensive patterns. Dismantling those defenses, by seeing your specific vows and releasing them, is the work you will do in the Life Purpose Profile Program in Part III.

About Your Vows: A Summary

- 1. You never get rid of your vows.** Vows are deep-rooted beliefs hooked into your nervous system to become autonomic, impulsive reactions. You can only see them after

they have triggered a feeling or behavior. To recall the energy that vows deny, you must feel that pattern of self-denial emerging and make the choice to honor your core soul profile quality.

2. There are no good vows. Regardless of how “good” some vows may sound, they all limit you and make you someone you are not. Who you are, as expressed through your vows, comes from a negative life choice, triggered by childhood traumas and fears rather than from your real life purpose.

3. Vows keep you stuck in the past. You know that you are letting an ancient vow run your life when your behavior is childish and you feel like a victim. When a vow is triggered, you experience current events from the lens of a child or infant who is terrified of being rejected or unloved.

4. Vows divide and polarize your world. Your vows divide the world into the “good people” who do the “right thing,” and the “bad people” who do the “wrong thing.” The line is drawn not according to any objective standard but according to your subjective internal judgment. That line cuts through you and slices off the energy you need to live your life purpose, channeled through deep self-acceptance and knowing.

5. Vows suck your energy. Vows make your life hard work rather than enjoyable and purpose-filled. Once released, you can rechannel your energy and begin to double and triple the energy available to you at any time.

6. Vows are never your life purpose. Over a lifetime, your vows become the principles you think you must stand for and act on to give you a sense of purpose. But in vowing to be a *good*, caring, and strong person, you are choosing not to be a real person but rather a perfect person, which is never your life purpose. Trying to be what you are not leaves you unable to live an inspired life pursuing the career, relationships, and sense of well-being that are your birthright.

7. Vows, when broken, always bring up guilt and shame. Accepting that you will feel guilt and shame when breaking an ancient vow is the beginning of true personal growth. Feeling the guilt and shame and acting anyway is the path back to wholeness.

8. Vows fade when you start to live in your core soul qualities. Only by replacing your vows with your true identity do you become free to call back the energy that gives you the courage to live an extraordinary life. When you choose your core soul qualities over your vows, you start to build a life that is authentic, pleasurable, and fully able to weather life's storms.

