

Personal Rule of Life Statements – Anna Stefano
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My Roles:

“Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed within the context of your primary relationships and your spiritual community, and lived out in service to others” (p.21)

My primary relationships are the girls who I am sharing an apartment with, my small church family, my two closest friends, and the women that I serve in my ministry. I love getting to live with other single women and I feel called to live intentionally with them and be family for each other. On a daily basis this looks like me being available to connect with them, ask how they are doing, offer help and receive help from them, and share meals when possible. My church family includes three families, four individuals, and several kids who meet together as a house church in Jackson Heights. I love my role in this small community where I can exercise each of my spiritual gifts of teaching, encouraging, facilitating worship, and hospitality from week to week. I have had a lot of different close and significant friendships over the years in the different locations I have lived. It is impossible for me to maintain relational closeness with all my dear friends due to time and distance. I am committed to my best friend Grace in Pennsylvania and we communicate regularly via text or phone call. My other closest friend, Elise, lives in my neighborhood and we are committed to being there for each other, having fun together, and being accountability partners. The women who I serve in ministry are primarily Bengali Muslim women and I love the opportunity to build relationships with them at the community center or in their home. My life is so much richer because of their relationship and my role within the mission organization as a team member. I love learning another language and studying social work because I can see how these two pieces of my life can fit together and enable me to walk in the calling that God has showed to me.

My Gifts:

“Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed through the discovery of your spiritual gifts, natural talents and temperament” (p.32)

There are times when I feel more in touch with my spiritual gifts than others. This is often affected by the closeness or lack thereof in my walk with Jesus. I have been blessed to have mentors and close friends call out spiritual giftings in me, such as the gift of teaching. The first spiritual gifting that I prayed for as a young girl was for discernment. Other spiritual giftings include faith, listening to the Holy Spirit, hospitality, and compassion. My natural talents are music, cooking, creativity, problem solving, writing, and athleticism. I have been able to connect with God throughout my life through music, whether listening to it or creating it. I love to sing and feel fully alive when I get to sing. I know that through music and creativity I can serve others in limitless ways. My high levels of energy, that mostly shows up in my athleticism, can be channelled to serve others in my work and free time because I have a high capacity to be with people and help them. My natural temperament is split down the middle between party person and a quiet reflective wanderer. I love to be with my people and fuel the energy in my family and friend group. I also have a high need to retreat and get to a quiet place and soak up all of God's goodness in the peacefulness of solitude.

My Desires:

“Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed through the longings, yearnings and goals God has placed on your heart and mind that propel you forward with joy” (p.43)

The deepest longings of my heart are to be loved, to not feel shame, to be cared for, and to be home. My Rule of Life flows from the awareness of my desires and living intentionally in the place and with the people that the Lord has given me right now. My core desire to be loved was something I identified when I was in college and sifting through my disappointment in my relationship with my mom. I know that she loves me and always has, but our love languages are completely different and so there were many times in my growing up years that I did not feel her love. I tried to adapt myself and make adjustments in my life and who I was so that I could receive her affirmation and attention. I had the same pattern with other relationships. At this point, I acknowledge that my deep longing to be loved goes hand in hand with the strong desire to be known and these desires are satisfied in my relationship with Jesus. I have the desire to be cared for and not abandoned. I have a fear of abandonment that has wreaked havoc on me in past seasons, but in this season I am living in acknowledge and honesty with my desire to not feel alone and to have people in my life who care for me in practical and faithful ways. I have a desire to be home. My family has moved many times; I have moved many times as an adult and so the reality of my life is that when I think of home my mind doesn't know where to land. I think of my family and my people, and of multiples places and homes. This longing to come home has been instrumental in my life as God has used it to craft in me a bigger and bigger space in my heart that longs for my eternal home. I belong to Jesus and I belong to a city that He is building and a place that I have never yet seen.

My Vision:

“Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed within the holistic, long-term vision and passion God had planted in your heart” (p.54)

The passion that God has planted in me is to fight for injustice, to help hurting women, and to weep with those who weep. The passion that God has given me fuels me forward in life particularly in figuring out where I am supposed to live and what my vocation can be. My vision is to serve women who live in the 10/40 window, that is the part of the world that still has the greatest need for the gospel message to be sown. I am attracted to North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia for the reason that these places are within the 10/40 window. I want to work with others to help women overcome poverty, violence, abuse, war, and natural disaster. I desire to work with women for women and see them live fully into their identity as image bearers of God's glory. I love to live into my calling of joy, that is to be joyful in every season and every circumstance. I feel led by God to hurt among women, families, and people who have experienced great suffering and trauma in their life because God's light reaches to those places.

My joy is not dependent on good circumstances, and I feel most able to live into my calling to joy when I am serving women who have suffered a great deal.

My Mission:

“Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed within the specific purpose(s) God invites you to fulfill in this season of life” (p.66)

In this specific and very full season, my mission is to be faithful in my work and relationships. The work in front of me right now is graduate school at Alliance University, my internship at Healing for the Soul Empowerment Network, and my job at International Project. The place that I am living is very important to my mission as well. As I am living long distance from my family and some of my closest friends in this season, I am free to pursue with more time the calling that God has given me to love and reach out to my neighbors from Bangladesh and India. My purpose is to live in a strategic place so that I can live alongside people from unreached countries and communities and have the opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus in a way that is understandable and attractive to them. I love to live contextually and learn from other cultures and adapt in a way that honors Jesus. I love embracing the role of ambassador as I follow Jesus and am obedient to God’s call on my life.