

Personal Rule of Life

Roles

The first step to crafting a 'Rule of Life' is to assess the different roles I have as a person. When I think of my many roles in life, the first one that comes to mind is that I am a Wife. Out of all the roles I play, wife is the one I have played the shortest. However, it is one I take immensely seriously. The remaining roles, I consider most important would be, Mother, Daughter, Sister, Employee, Student, Church Member. I was then asked to consider which of these roles give me positive feelings, and which roles do I feel are a bit exhausting. When I think about these things, I considered all my relationships neutral, they were all exhausting in their own way, but they also gave life. For example, my husband scored the highest on the rating because he is a great support. However, there are a couple habits I wish he would change that do frustrate me. Even so, when I am asked which relationship I think I want to work on the most, the answer is clear: Church Member. Out of all the feelings I have towards my roles, Church members are the one I find I have the most negative relationship with. It is not because I dislike my church or hardly attend, but it is because I want to do so much more and am not being heard. I also feel like I am not being taken seriously which is unimaginably frustrating. Interestingly enough, I also feel this way at my place of employment, and was told that I need to take more initiative and be assertive in communicating the things I want. I suppose my rule in life is to be assertive and take initiative in the roles that matter to me, and to not settle for waiting to be recognized.

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual Gifts is something I often think about because I always want to know how can I play my part in fulfilling God's kingdom. When I consider what my spiritual gifts are, I would identify them as Teaching, Administration and Leadership. These gifts are shown through some of the activities I do in church and outside of church. For example, I have done tutoring for many years and desire to be a professor one day. On the other hand, I lead worship on Sundays at my Church. Although worship leading is leadership, I feel that I am being called to use my gift outside of the ways I am using them right now. I have a strong pull to begin teaching the word in a group and in church. I also feel that I am supposed to use my leadership and administration skills to advance the organization of the church overall. However, I'm not sure if I want the responsibility right now because I am mentally and physically tired. So I ask myself, how can I use my gifts without exhausting myself. I think the first step is to build a team or find a partner with similar goals for advancement. That way I have someone to share the responsibility with. Secondly, I can approach leadership in the ministry and discuss how I would like to expand in the areas I currently serve. Lastly, I will pray to God for wisdom and courage to walk in the gifts I have been given.

Desires:

When I think about my greatest desires in life, I would say it is to have a family of my own, to own a home and to be debt free. Since I got married and had my son, I have already started the first step. However, I do hope to expand this family eventually. This is a bit challenging since I do not currently have a home large enough to accommodate a second or third child. My husband and I are also not financially able to take out a mortgage to purchase a home. These factors are frustrating to me because there is little I can do to change the barriers I am

facing. But I find comfort in the word of God where it says: “Delight yourself in the Lord and he will grant you the desires of your heart.” I love the Lord, and it is my desire to live a life and have a family that glorifies him. Moreover, I desire to be an example of how wonderful life can be when you trust in the Lord. So my rule of life when it comes to the desires of my heart is to be patient and trust that God will work it out.

Vision & Mission:

When referring to my vision and mission, the book challenges me to complete a statement: When I imagine my life in Partnership with God, I desire _____ more than anything. At this moment, what I desire more than anything is to advance the charitable works ministry at my Church. As mentioned earlier, my spiritual gifts include social work and counseling. On the hand, my church mission statement is embedded in Isaiah 58:6-12 which speaks about doing many charitable acts. While completing my Masters in Social Work, I began having several ideas to advance the ministry including opening a ‘Transitional Home’ for children aging out of foster care in Sint Maarten. I also had some ideas on how I could improve the church’s administrative processes. I know this is something that God has put in my heart because he has provided me various opportunities, including my masters, to aid my ministry. Although I do feel like I still have areas to continue growing in. As a result my mission statement is to continue growing spiritually, physically, and mentally to achieve the goals set by me and God. In regards to goals, I think I will give myself one spiritual, one physical, and one mental goal to accomplish each year.

TIME :

Time is one of the most valuable currencies in the world. Therefore, when I consider what rules my time, I say whatever is urgent. Because of how little time I have in a day, I often

prioritize urgent tasks, such as work and school responsibilities. Unfortunately, this generally leaves my relationship with God not prioritized. Because of free-will and God's willingness to allow us to determine the depth of our relationship with him, He often is not a priority. However, I do see that having urgency to rule my time is not the most effective way to live. Instead, I think mastering discipline will benefit my life and will help me to manage my time better.

When I think of this desire to spend more time with God, I think of my friend who weight-lifts. She has incorporated exercise in her life, and ensures that even on her hardest days she goes on her scheduled time, because she is committed to her lifestyle. Although to some people her dedication may seem extreme, I find it commendable. That is why my rule of life is to no longer let urgency rule my life, but to identify what is important to me and give it the attention it deserves. Seeing that my relationship with God is important, what I will do moving forward is create a schedule where I will spend time with Him through various means. This can involve watching a sermon, or reading the bible. Eitherway, I will be managing my time to prioritize importance so that I do not have to be ruled by urgency.

TRUST:

The next aspect to crafting a rule of life is assessing Trust. I began by assessing what are the greatest intangible gifts from the people closest to me. When I consider who these people are, I think of my immediate family, and my closest friends. Some of the intangibles I am grateful for are Protection, Provision, Guidance, Friendship, and Support. I have a great support system. However, when I am asked which relationship I think needs the most attention, I think that relationship is the one with myself. I am discouraged at times, and frustrated about the things I struggle to fulfill such as homeownership. Furthermore, it's also been frustrating working so hard at school, with the hopes that I get a job that will afford my expenses and my

goals. The culmination of these feelings have left me feeling discouraged, and ultimately distrustful towards myself. I worry that despite my efforts, it will never be enough. However, I understand that this extreme thinking is unrealistic, and that eventually I will achieve my goals. All in all, my rule of life is to trust myself and in my abilities.

My rule of life is to also be patient with myself in the process of achieving my goals, and becoming the person I want to be. Very often, I forget that I am only 25, and that the majority of people around me do not become homeowners until their 30s, and the people who get it before are anomalies. Of course, my son and my desire for independence aggravates this desire but I need to give myself grace. What I will do in the meantime to rebuild my trust in myself is resume journaling, so I can reflect on everything I've accomplished. Even in this moment where I'm about to graduate with my Masters, I need to trust myself that my hard work will result in me getting my goals eventually.

TEMPLE:

Before reading this book, I only considered the temple as the physical body. However, I've come to understand that the temple is the total combination of the body, soul and mind, and each part should be tended to. As a result, I am challenged to develop daily, monthly, weekly and annual habits to train my body, mind and heart. I have already started going to the gym on a weekly basis when I can, but I know I can eat healthier. Therefore, every week I will try to make a healthy meal with either fruits and vegetables. I think I should also make it a habit to have a check up with my doctor and dentist every 3-4 months. In regards to my mind and heart, I will continue to read books for enjoyment but also educational and spiritual advancement. Lastly, I understand that the body needs rest, so once I have completed my MSW, I am going to try to adopt a proper Sabbath every week. I am even planning to take a vacation to the Dominican

Republic because it has been so long since I have done something of that nature. For a long time I have taken pride in how hard I work; I would like to take pride in how much I am rested. My rule of life is to make time for my temple and rest. I do not want to work so hard that my body cannot physically enjoy the things I've worked so hard for.

TREASURE

In the process of completing my rule of life, I found that assessing my treasure was the most important one; seeing that managing my finances is what I struggle with the most. In this economy, where everything is much more expensive than what it used to be decades ago, it is important to be able to make money. On the other hand, it is even more important to learn how to manage that money effectively. When I consider my finances currently, I acknowledge that I have a lot of expenses due to moving back to my home country and making a family of my own. I often think that if my expenses decreased, I would be able to save more, but based on my current habits, I believe I would just find new things to spend my money on. One thing I know I spend too much money on is food. Because I do not enjoy cooking, I often buy lunch at work and spend a large amount of my salary on food. However, I understand that if my goal is to be debt free, I must take control over my spending habits. Moreover, if I spend money I need to ensure I spend it on items that can return an investment. As a result, the rule of life I make regarding my treasure is to make more time to learn financial literacy practices such as the importance of budgeting, saving and investing. Reading is one of my many hobbies, so I will start to read more financial literacy books, while also discovering hobbies that can provide additional income.

TALENT

The last aspect of framing my rule of life is by assessing my Talent. If I had to describe what I consider my talents to be, I would say they are singing, public speaking, and teaching. When I consider how often I use my talents, singing is the talent I use the most, since I lead worship every week; however, teaching is something I would like to do more often. Ideally, I would love to be a professor in Social Work or another discipline on a collegiate level in the near to distant future. Even so, I do feel a strong pull to begin teaching the word of God. During my undergraduate education, I was able to receive a minor in biblical theology alongside my master's in social work. I have learned a great deal about the bible, and also tips to understand what I know I can share with fellow believers in my ministry. Ideally, I would execute this plan through a Young Adult bible study group. However, I am hesitant to pursue this endeavor as it would mean investing more time and energy which is limited to me. Nevertheless, I am committed to using my talents for the Lord, similar to the parable of the servants with talents. I want God to be pleased with my life, and the effective use of my talent. As a result, my rule of life is to find balance and time to share my talents with the people who benefit from it most, but never at the expense of my peace where I begin to resent it.

	SPIRITUAL LY (TIME)	RELATIONALLY (TRUST)	PHYSICALL Y (TEMPLE)	FINANCIALL Y (TREASURE)	MISSIONAL LY (TALENT)
DAILY / REGULARLY	Pray and Read Bible	Journal Pray	Drink Enough Water Listen to Positive Affirmations	Go To Work Edit Student Papers for Additional Income	Journal Ideas for Future TAY Group Home
WEEKLY	Attend Church Services	Quality Time Activities with Friends & Families	Attend Gym Read Leisure Books Cook Health Meal	Make Budget Plans for Spending	Lead Worship in Church
MONTHLY	Complete Devotion Plans	Participate in Self Care Activity of Choice	Complete Spiritual Devotions Real Self-Help Books	Make Monthly Budget Save Percentage of Salary	Work on YA Group Bible Study Material
QUARTERLY/ SEASONALLY	Practice New Time Management Habits	Do Family Activity with Husband and Child	Visit Doctor or Dentist	Read Financial Literacy Books	Read Books on Utilizing Spiritual Gifts & Talent
ANNUALLY	Attend Conferences Seminars	Take a Vacation	Journal Goals for the Year	Make Large Payments Towards Debt	Seek Opportunities to Practice Spiritual Teaching

© Stephen A. Macchia | Adapted from *Crafting A Rule of Life*, 2012. All rights reserved.