

# SOLIDMAN

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strong · present · confident

Pillar Three

Group Exercise #14

Question #4: What do I want?

Developing a Life of Thriving

## 14 WHAT DO I WANT?; THRIVING

Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder. – George Washington

Get busy living or get busy dying. – Shawshank Redemption

This is the second exercise which will help you answer question #4 “What do I want?”. It is also going to help you get deeper into the practice of living from your heart.

This exercise exists for the purpose of developing a life of personal responsibility that has the higher goal of “thriving”. Those who struggle with integrity have been trained to live on much less than what it takes to live life in full. They barely get what they need to survive, let alone get what they need to be strong and healthy. These men definitely don’t pursue or receive the essentials that is required to live as a powerful, influential and present man.

This exercise is about thriving and living a life of abundant vitality. This experience is about increasing your life to another level. It is breaking free of a scarcity mentality and beginning to live with the idea that abundance is attainable.

**☞ You are responsible for your sense of well-being, so make your life thrive!**

Let’s use a lawn for example. A lawn can survive with a minimal amount of water and care. However, if you want the lawn to thrive and win the neighborhood competition; it will require a decent watering schedule, regularly scheduled fertilizer, aeration, weed mitigation, possibly some pest control, mowing and a watchful eye. The lawn is now thriving; it is the best it can be.

A person is the same way. Each person needs love, nurture, connection, freedom, autonomy, kindness, purpose, safety and security in order to thrive. An internally referenced man will take the reins of his life and be responsible for his own well-being. Begin to treat yourself with respect and dignity. Your life is your responsibility; you can’t wait around for someone else to make thriving happen for you.

**☞ Don’t wait around for others to make a life of thriving happen.**

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To live to the fullest we need the people around us to join with us to make it all happen. It is a collaborative effort. Gather people around you who are excited about helping you with this and join in helping them with thriving as well!

*What does it feel like to even talk about caring for your Self in such a way?*

*Off the top of your head what do you need in order for you to thrive not just survive?*

**Penance**

One of the reasons the pursuit of thriving doesn't get much traction is a concept called Penance. Penance is any act of self-mortification or devotion performed voluntarily to show sorrow for a sin or other wrongdoing.

Penance comes in many forms such as; confession, prayer, humiliation, subservience, reparative actions, submission, amends, asceticism, self-denial, etc.

☞ **Penance is working to pay off your sin through various actions**

Here's the clincher, you will NEVER be able to do enough things, humble yourself enough or say I was wrong enough in order to erase the pain or negative consequences your actions have caused.

☞ **In other words, Penance does not work.**

There is a time when you must shift from paying penance to caring for yourself well. Continually paying penance is part of why you are in this mess in the first place.

Here's what normally happens. A man will make a mistake or commit an offense. Then his woman who is hurt and feels pain from the offense will "hold" the offense over his head (penance) until there is resolution.

This looks like continually going back to account for past transgressions big and miniscule. It feels like you are reminded constantly of your mistakes and failures.

Since most people don't know how to resolve things, this might never be resolved. So the couple will live in cold resentment forever or separate painfully.

What usually causes the mistakes or offenses in the first place is not being overtly responsible for making sure your needs are met in your life.

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The penance cycle looks like this; 1) We don't care for ourselves well. 2) We commit an offense which was trying to get our needs met, sometimes foolishly. 3) We then don't believe that we deserve to have your needs met and that we need to pay a penalty (penance). 4) We will double-down and never ask for what we need. Thus the cycle keeps replicating itself and you find yourself in a downward vortex of shame and penance, without ever getting your core needs met. This is not thriving.

In a relationship, your woman will usually follow your lead. If you think you still need to pay penance, she will make you pay. If you are done paying penance, she will be more likely to drop it and move on.

This is also closely related to the concept of forgiveness. Forgiveness is basically dropping the need to make someone pay for their offense, not forgetting, but moving on. If it is held over your head, it is not forgiven or resolved. Resolution is a profound thing to master.

***How have you lived by the rule of penance?***

***In what ways are you stuck by penance and unable to move forward?***

**Thriving**

In order to recover your life well, there must be a shift from Penance to Thriving. Thriving is growing and developing with vigor and flourish. Thriving is being alive, passionate, healthy and at peace.

So the shift is from asking the question, "What do I need to do to fix everything so people are happy with me?" to "What do I need for myself in order to be the most alive, healthy man that I can be?"

What are the things you need personally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally to thrive in the healthiest way that you can? Because we are so busy trying to fix with penance, not only do we forget to nurture ourselves, we even lose touch with the core needs and wants that help us bring richness to living.

There are three ways to calculate how we need to take care of ourselves; by what we need for survival, by what we think we deserve or by what will help us thrive in abundance. The following graph will help you to see these three categories.

*When you hear the word “Thrive”, what’s your reaction?*

*What clues do you have of things that get in the way of a life of thriving?*

Put an “X” on this graph where you generally think you live. And put one where you want to live.

**Thriving**

Things that enrich; admiration, respect, love, kindness, purpose, mission, passion, influence, good sex

-----**Thrive - Level**-----



Things for growth; nutrition, exercise, spirituality, support and appreciation, medical, affection or touch, opportunity

-----**Growth - Level**-----



Things I “Deserve”; humiliation, contempt, a little love, Throw the dog a “bone”, penance,

-----**Deserve - Level**-----



Basic survival; shelter, safety, clothes, work, space

-----**Survive - Level**-----



Real survival; food, air, water

-----**Dying - Level**-----

If we live for what we and others think we deserve, we will never become the men we know we have been designed to be. If we live just for what we need, we will be doing better, but never gain strength in our lives as well. We need to find out what helps us grow and thrive, and make that happen on our lives, unapologetically. The purpose of this exercise is to help you consider how to keep moving up into the enrichment sphere of life.

*Who or what usually determines what level you live on?*

*What level do you usually live on, what does that look like?*

## Calculating What We Deserve

People use equations to determine the level of need that they have at any given moment of their life. These equations are something we just took on or just accepted as we moved through life. We will challenge those here.

Women often calculate what they have done, sacrificed and given; add that to their status among others and then that is what they deserve, which is still way less for a healthy life.

☞ **The Woman's Equation; What I've given or sacrificed + My Status = What I deserve**

Men usually calculate the good they have done, sacrificed and the things they've gotten right; then subtract the mistakes they have made, which then equals what they deserve.

☞ **The Man's Equation; What I got right – What I've done wrong = What I deserve**

A man's equation never seems to end up with a positive outcome. It always seems that you don't deserve much, as though the equation is set against you.

Both equations send everybody into living in a place of deficit. There needs to be a new equation that has nothing to do with "deserve".

☞ **The new equation; Me + Abundance = Thrive**

We need to reshape our mindset that humans work best when they are given all the goods in order to thrive. If you are going to be at your best, you need significant nurturing things in your life as well as those things that make you come alive.

Life is not a matter of deserving, entitlement or demand; it just is Life. As a human you need to be nurtured well in order to live the abundant life you were designed to live. There is no calculating, it just is. You have been designed to live in full abundance.

*What has been your personal equation, to figure out what you deserve?*

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Another way that we have learned to settle for less than thriving is that many faith traditions actually suggest you deserve less. Have you ever heard anyone say “I am a sinner, I deserve Hell” or “you must sacrifice your Self in order to be acceptable to God”?

These mindsets seem to be contrary to Christ’s desire for an “abundant life” for you. A profound theological perspective that Jesus threw into the mix was something called “Grace”.

**☞ Life is a free gift to accept.**

Grace is getting what I don’t deserve. To him, all the goodness of life, love and abundance was an undeserved gift from God. So, why would I not accept this free gift? Life is not about earning and deserving, it’s accepting.

This is a huge reason to live life with gratitude and be thankful for everything. Sure you may have achieved and accomplished great things, but the ability to do those things came as a gift. Be grateful.

If your faith tradition is more about sacrifice and asceticism than abundance and thriving, question this for yourself. If the messages you get are about buckling down and disciplining yourself to get it right, ask yourself if this is the truth that this is what life is about.

***What messages have you received about thriving or deserving? \_\_\_\_\_***

**Gaining Ground**

Let’s start with some basics. First is the concept of believing the true narrative of your life. You must be willing to challenge all the lies you have accepted about your identity and the false names you have taken for yourself.

You must start with forgiving and accepting yourself. Or at least accept the fact that you are forgiven and accepted. Once you can forgive yourself, it makes sense that you might deserve some really good things in your life.

***What have I never forgiven myself for?***

***What could do to forgive myself?***

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Forgiving others is another basic step. If you are living with bitterness and resentment, your life will become bitter and resentful. You must find it within yourself to release hurt, justice or whatever you're holding onto.

Joanna Weaver said "Bitterness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die." Holding on to resentment only kills your soul and does no one any good. It is something that causes a ton of hurt and distance in relationships. Forgiveness is so simple, but it requires humility, which is a commodity which is hard to come by.

***Who do I have in my life that I need to forgive and let resentment go?***

**Being Responsible for Your Basic Needs**

Know what you need. You must go through the process of discovering and understanding what you need. Since you have spent your lifetime disregarding your wants and needs this can be difficult.

👉 **Self-care must become one of your competencies.**

Consider how well you care for your physical needs; sleep, nutrition, exercise, healthcare, flossing, etc.

What are your personal needs; relationships with friends, hobbies, passions, excitement, etc.?

What are your relational needs; appreciation, affection, sex, respect, understanding, emotional safety, kindness, etc.?

What are your spiritual needs; closeness with God, time for your daily practice, community of faith, encouragement, etc.?

***What are the needs you have neglected or have hidden away?***

**Consistent O<sub>2</sub> Mask Work.**

As we said in chapter 6, taking care of yourself, so you can love others well is such an important concept. Many of us have been trained to neglect ourselves in order to please others. We must retrain ourselves to take care of ourselves first. Otherwise no one is actually cared for.

*For you, what does the metaphor of putting on your O<sub>2</sub> mask look like?*

*The O<sub>2</sub> mask was about becoming the strongest man you could be so you could love yourself and others well. What obstacles do you have that make you hesitate in your own self-care?*

### **Standing Up For Your Self Unapologetically.**

This actually is more difficult than it looks. Standing up for yourself requires that you break the rules of the system. It means being unapologetic about things like the fact that you are a sexual human being and sex provides a number of deep and important things for your soul. Things like closeness, affection, feeling wanted, orgasmic pleasure and intimacy are provided.

*What are the things you need to be unapologetic for?*

### **Never say “I’m Sorry Ever Again**

A man of integrity never has to say he is sorry. The words “I’m Sorry” are some of the most empty words ever spoken. There is no substance to them. A man of integrity takes responsibility and ownership when he makes a mistake by saying the words “I was wrong.” whenever he makes a mistake. Saying I’m sorry is just a brushoff to get people to look the other way. Living unapologetically requires ownership and self-accountability.

*How have I been “Sorry-man”?*

*What has happened in my relationships when I own it and say I was wrong?*

### **Being Responsible for Thriving**

Just like the lawn had needs in order to thrive, you have a list of things that will nurture your soul as well. So your main goal for this exercise is to identify and list at least nine main things you need in order to live consistently on the thrive level. Then you need to make a plan with at least nine action items to begin to make this happen consistently in your life.

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**Group Presentation**

*What could I do to take more personal responsibility for my well-being and thriving?*

*How have I been paying penance? What have I been missing out on by paying penance?*

**Main Things I Need In Order To Thrive; Thrive Components**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Your goal is to create an environment where your heart is nurtured and thriving. List at least seven action items you can begin to do to create that environment with the Thrive Components.

**Action Items; What I am Going to DO To Make Thriving Happen In My Life**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

*What are the most important things you learned from this lesson?*