



Self-Leadership

Building the bottom of your boat to navigate the second half of your life

The Scoop

As you age, the storm clouds can gather, and the seas can get rough.

The Skinny

- A deep heavy keel is needed to handle the second half of your life.
 - Build the bottom of your boat with relationships.
 - Less ego and more grace.
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To navigate the rough waters that the second half of your life will bring, it really helps to have a boat with a deep heavy keel. Everyone should be spending time on the building and maintaining of the bottom of their boat. **Things like quiet time, relationships, and communication help build the bottom of the boat.** These elements allow you to feel grounded and solid. You will need to have a centered mental life to manage through the sickness and death that accompanies getting older.

The picture of the boat we would like you to focus on is viewing the boat from the side. **Picture looking under the water and seeing the keel of the boat. The question posed is, what goes at the very bottom?** The science says that the very



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bottom layer of the boat is the most important part for having a stable vessel. In your life what is the bottom layer made out of? When you think about the single greatest question of life, do you have an answer? Don't worry, most of us don't, but we are suggesting you might want to open up that bottom layer now that you are getting older, and get some oxygen flowing down there. For most, the question of "Why am I here" is down there. There are no easy answers, but working on the question starts the process of laying some nice heavy lead in the bottom layer of your boat. **Leaving it alone is like stuffing it with cardboard or Styrofoam. It might fit the frame of the structure, but it won't do the**

job in a storm.

Right above your inner work layer sits a stratum of relationships. The first layer is your immediate family. Your mother, father, and siblings. You spent a great deal of time with these people and most likely see them much less frequently now that you have a family of your own. **How and what you think of these people has a massive impact on your view on life.** All families, like all humans, are made up of different personalities and different habits rolled up into a large amount of forced cohabitation. This is the perfect oven for hard and fast impressions and judgement. Most of which you have put on a shelf and moved forward from. We suggest that you take these impressions and opinions and put them in the steam room. Soften up the old rocks and see if you can't understand them in a new light. What makes them



happy and sad, what are their interests? **If you came across them in the street as a stranger and you have coffee would you have a nice time?**

The reason to look at your inner family this way is that it frees you up to be building momentum with them as you both age. **Aging without family is a very rough experience.** Looking to rekindle relationships after you need them is a hollow effort. Make the effort to share your life with your family while they are alive. Find common ground and stay there. Do not seek to win whatever age-old battle might exist and celebrate that you have a family.



Self Leadership

To survive the rough seas do you want a keel of lead or of styrofoam?
Ask the hard questions now?

Develop your why.

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With the two deepest layers of your boat open in your mind, you are well on your way to laying some nice lead down there. You are strengthening your mental capacity to see the world through other's eyes and the contribution you can make while you are here.

The next layers have a lot to do with the people you have chosen to be with: your wife and your children. In theory this should be much easier, you picked each other and your made your kids. So, what could be so difficult? **The difference here is that you and your spouse need to constantly work on how your marriage will evolve as your interests and needs change.** They are not your roommate, this is the key human

relationship of your life. You need to figure out how much attention they need, what environment they thrive in and then seek to support them on their path. Your kids are a fast-moving river of physical, mental and emotional change. They come out screaming and don't slow down. The good news is they are yours, and you just about burst with happiness at the very sight of them. So, you will clean up the mess, take the extra time to listen and do your best to help them. That is the easy part, the hard part is that you can't control them and they are all individuals who when contained too long will break right before your very eyes.



Self Leadership

Your relationships with family and friends are the next layer to your deep heavy keel.

Who needs to hear from you?
Relate with grace.
Be present.

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It is with this constraint that we all realize that marriage and parenting is a bit like working with a hula hoop. To get it started you need to be totally focused on the hoop. If you force the motion it will just fall to the ground. However, if you get it going in the right direction and with the right rhythm you can keep it going for ever with very little effort on your part. When you are in sync with your spouse and kids you have very little friction, and you spin around each other with ease. This creates positive emotion and energy for all of you, and helps you collaborate on whatever task is before your team.



Self Leadership

The keys to a healthy long term relationship are empathy and mutual respect.

Feel for them.
Encourage them.
Suspend judgement.

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Having your family in sync is a daily exercise in getting the hula hoop started. It's all about them. Once you have this mindset you will find that the bottom of your boat has another solid layer. That keel is getting deeper and heavier; you have a storm ready vessel.

These three layers at the bottom of your boat need attention at a variety of intervals. Build out a system for regular interaction with all of them, and watch as you are better prepared for the twists and turns of life.

You cannot control what is going to happen to all the key people in your life, there are too many variables. **What you can contribute towards is helping that system of**

relationships have a language of care and love to adapt to the changes with the most efficiency and energy as possible.



Self Leadership

Your spouse and kids are the next layer of your boat. This takes listening and patience.

How does your spouse learn?
Where do you children lose track of time?

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Your boat now has three very solid layers on which you can put your friendships and interests. If you really like making money, it is easier with this bottom three up and running. If you want to change the world for good through a nonprofit, it will again be easier with these three levels humming along.

The view from the top of your vessel is grand and you should feel like you can chart a course for any destination. **Just remember to build your base on relationships of you and the world, you and your immediate family, and you and your new family.** These three ballasts will help you advance your causes and help make as big a ping in the universe as your skills and talents afford.