

Establishing a Personal Philosophy in Life

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Well-being is the byproduct of countless ingredients, including but not limited to physical and emotional safety, engagement in meaningful and mutually satisfying relationships, involvement in productive work (such as employment and/or pursuit of constructive activities), financial stability, and more.

At Beech Brook, we subscribe to a *learning organization* management philosophy espoused by Peter Senge and his associates at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.). This approach is based on five disciplines: **shared vision, mental models, team learning, personal mastery, and systems thinking.**

When a group of individuals **share a compelling vision**, they will put aside their differences and work together toward a desired outcome. Being a member of well-functioning teams invites satisfaction, a sense of belonging, and competency pleasure.

All involved will have their own **set of ideas (a.k.a. mental models)** that they will tend to believe are self-evident, whether they can stand up to scrutiny or not. Naturally, the ideal is to remain flexible enough to be challenged in a friendly way for a quick shift in thinking if supplied with new evidence to the contrary of an original personal belief.

Team learning speaks to the value of multiple perspectives and diversity when addressing matters of importance. With high frequency, two or more heads are better than one.

Personal mastery highlights the reality that all of us are on a journey....hopefully one of lifelong learning. There is endless information to learn and apply in life for achievement of desired outcomes.

Systems thinking appreciates the interconnectedness of things. This implies that complexity can be overlooked, leading to simple understandings and quick solutions that fail to fix whatever problem or challenge that is at hand.

These disciplines can help you create a **personal philosophy**, something that is helpful for day-to-day life and decision making.

What is your vision, meaning what do you wish to achieve in life?

Do your significant others share major aspects of the “dreams” you have for the future?

Are you committed to keeping an open mind for new ideas and mental models? If part of your personal vision to be a lifelong learner, a challenge is to get in front of old, perhaps once appropriate, mental models for exploration of and appreciation for today's truths. **Change is inevitable. Lean into it.**

In your life, do you access the best available information for the decisions that need to be made? Doing so means avoiding putting oneself on an island alone. Again, many times, two heads are better than one and some challenges in life require three, four or five heads, if not also extensive research, a call to experts and deep study to avoid superficial solutions that later backfire. For good decision-making, a person sometimes needs to get higher on the balcony to appreciate complexity and to gain a systemic view of everything and everyone involved.

While you may never fully attain all that you hope to in life, a robust personal philosophy of life can provide a pathway for purposeful action and decision making.