



Begin living your life on a 4C's model

The 4 C's

Opening

As humans we like to compartmentalize things, putting aspects of our lives in little boxes and taking them out and working on them within the framework of the particular box. In fact, everything is intertwined and interconnected, running at odds to tidy compartmentalization. So with that as background, we use this pamphlet to propose a system of organizing one's life into boxes, with the aforementioned limitation firmly on our radar screen.

In the education field there are the 5 C's of effective education (Creativity; Critical Thinking; Collaboration; Cooperation, and Communication) [Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2002]. These are potentially helpful in planning our curriculum improvements, defining learning goals, and conceiving potential innovations in education. These are education-based and are too limited in applying to the broader domain of a well-lived life, and we might playfully argue that the 5C's are one dimension too big for easy mental access. So we will propose here a system of compartmentalization that has four dimensions, which has the North-South-East-West level of complexity that covers the waterfront, yet is easy enough to remember.

We argue here that a life of a leader will be enhanced by a desire to make things better (**Creativity**), a productive and active physical life (**Corpus**—from the Latin for body), an existence fully lived with others (**Community**), and an appreciation of life situated within the mystery of who we really are and what our purpose here might be (**Contemplative**).

The Problem—What's Missing?

We tend to live our life in silos. We are at work or school, we are with our family or friends, we exercise or go for a walk, we hang out in nature or go to church. But often we forget some of the peripheral things or non-essential things, and they go quiet or stagnant. There may be ramifications to this, as a health problem emerges or a family member becomes estranged. Or we completely wall off some part of ourselves and this leads to even greater problems. What's missing from our lives as individuals and our collective lives as a society is the understanding that **all** aspects of a balanced life are important. They feed off each other and prevent problems based on inputs from each other. In essence, life is a complex multi-objective optimization problem, where everything in the system affects everything else. You may have an objective to be successful in your work, another objective to nurture your family, and yet another objective to grow as an individual. These objectives may compete with one another, where accomplishing more on one front means achieving less on another front. This complex system of a balanced life has a range of short-term and long-term constraints that all have to be met (get the report done by Thursday AND attend your kid's soccer game on Wednesday afternoon). And what ties together the multi-objective optimization problem of a balanced life is a set of decision variables that reflect the decisions you make on a day-to-day basis and over the long-term.



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For example, making the decision to get regular exercise helps one stay healthy, but it also gives you deeper sleep. Deeper sleep ensures you are rested, so that your work or studies are done effectively because of your enhanced ability to focus. Satisfaction with your work or studies creates a sense of accomplishment and a sense of calmness, which allows you the time away to spend on your hobbies, family time and community interaction. Feeling plugged in to the humans around you gives you a support network in challenging times. A regular contemplative practice gives you even more anxiety reduction, and potentially the ability to see your work and life in a much bigger picture. And all of this folds back into itself, with the resultant improved health and well-being allowing you more found time to exercise AND the time to do the many other things you want to accomplish and enjoy for a fulfilling life. All of the interconnected pieces intertwine to strengthen, refresh, repurpose and engage your life.

Credibility Story/Success Story

Examples abound of lives well lived, from countless Rhodes Scholars who epitomize a balanced life of success and achievement, to many unsung heroes who coach minor sports and contribute to service clubs and raise their families all across the world. But we tend to focus on celebrity examples, and a great example of this are Canada's astronauts who have excelled in their studies, finely honed their physical bodies, became superb team members and fantastic contributors to our Canadian society, and who have hinted at the mysteries of space shaping their internal lives in myriad ways. People such as the affable musician astronaut Chris Hadfield, Canada's Governor-General Julie Payette, federal cabinet minister Marc Garneau, and science advocate Roberta Bondar are all tremendous examples of this class of Canadian success story.

Clear Statement of Solution

We contend that the best way to move towards a more fulfilled life is to stop and take stock of where you are and where you want to be in all aspects of your life. Take the time to reflect, and identify how the adoption of a **4 C's** model would fit into your current life. How much time in a week or a month do you spend on things that use or enhance your **creativity**? How much time and energy in a given, typical week do you spend on your physical health, such that your **corpus** is stronger, fitter, healthier? What aspects in a given week, month, year do you spend on giving back to your **community**, making it stronger, more sustainable, more resilient? And how much time and focus in a given typical day or week do you spend on strengthening and shaping your interior landscape with your contemplative practices?

From this honest and thorough evaluation, you will be able to identify gaps or areas that you desire to allocate more energy to in the coming weeks, months, years. As this evaluation is undertaken, you will probably recognize the interdependent nature of many of these aspects, and the potential synergy that comes from improvement across a number of areas in your life.

We suggest you start small and allocate increments of time to the things you want to bring in or expand upon. Some current things may very well have to go to the wayside, as they no longer are giving you value within the new mental framework for your life. Evaluate how you feel as these elements come on to your dance card and hopefully energize your life, and then step back every week and see how things can be further modified to add more increments in areas that have positively changed the way you live.

Statement of Benefits

To illustrate potential benefits from following a 4C's approach in your life, let's start with some well-intentioned questions:

- Want better health?
- Want to do better at work or school?
- Want to be a better family member?
- Want to be a better friend?
- Want to have time to do the things you want to do?
- Want to be more creative?
- Want to have a greater sense of your individual purpose?

The odds are that you answered in the affirmative to ALL of the above questions. Is there another set of seven questions one could pose to a wide-ranging group of individuals and get a positive response on all questions, across the entire group? The above benefits relate to our deep essence, and to the common human experience we are all navigating. Who wouldn't want even an incremental gain in these benefits, if only one could identify a path forward to achieve these gains?

Summary-Starting Points

The 4C's model provides a framework for looking at your life, and identifying flexible compartments for assessing where you are currently at and where you need to allocate time to get to where you want to be. We maintain that as human beings we need the following components of our lives to be engaged and energized:

Creativity— We all have a uniquely human desire to be creative and innovative in conventional and non-conventional ways, in our work and play;

Corpus— As the old saying goes, 'nothing is worthwhile unless you are healthy enough to enjoy it'. Your body is the temple that holds your amazing human essence, and your good health is essential to the viability of your life;

Community— The service you give to your various communities you live in and engage with, improves the livability of your physical neighbourhood and the viability of the various networks that you participate in;

Contemplative—Finding time to be quiet, to be introspective, and following related practices give you the wisdom and focus to lead a purposeful life.

Closer Story—A "True Story" from Brian

I taught engineering at a research-intensive university for thirty years, and over that time I had the privilege of leading a department and a program that spanned across all of the departments in our Faculty of Engineering. I carried out some research with my graduate students, and I taught a range of undergraduate and graduate courses. It was a rewarding but busy job. And it allowed me the flexibility to help my wife with the raising of our family, and gave me the chance to do a number of community engagement initiatives within our local community.

But sometimes the hours in a day just disappeared. Sound familiar? To counteract this, I always blocked out the time to do some form of daily exercise, and to find the time to further a meditation practice and a daily Reiki self-treatment practice (an energy practice with Japanese roots). So during the term a few years back, it was 9:30 in the evening and I still hadn't stepped away to give myself Reiki. This normally takes thirty to sixty minutes, and I habitually go to bed at 10:00. No problem, right? But I hadn't developed an example for my graduate class the next day, and I had found from experience this took a half hour or so to conceptualize, write out the related equations, and come up with reasonable numbers to plug in. If I worked on the problem I would have it in hand for the class, but no Reiki would have been experienced that day. If I did Reiki and then worked on the problem, I would get to bed late. Neither solution was totally appealing, so I opted for the Reiki first and then work. Reiki is a mindfulness practice, a contemplative practice, a spiritual practice. So I opted for mindfulness first, as a priority over work. I reckoned that the refreshment and focus that would come from the Reiki would assist me as I stayed up a bit late developing the example problem. But a miraculous thing happened. With about two minutes to go in my thirty minutes of Reiki, I had my eyes closed and in my mind's eye two large curtains parted and there on a big blackboard was an example problem written out clearly in chalk. I mentally looked over the problem writeup and thought "Hmm, that's a pretty good problem, I could use that tomorrow!" And then I swore I heard a quiet voice say "Got it?" And then the two large curtains closed, just like you would see on a theatre stage. So I jumped up and spent a few minutes writing down the example problem that I had seen on the mental screen, and was in bed by 10:10. Ten minutes off schedule, but far better than the 10:45 that had been projected, and the Reiki practice benefits had been realized. And the next day in class, the example was very well received by my students.