



Find Your North Star

LET THE GRAVITY OF YOUR STAR PULL YOU INTO YOUR DREAMS

In the deepest recesses of your deeper being is a spark of pure aliveness. What obscures your spark? How might you better reveal the glow without judgment and with compassion and respect?

And out beyond your farthest grasp is a star that calls you. What obscures your star? How can your star guide you to build a life of health, courage, dignity, love, and purpose?

The spiritual journey—the journey of total aliveness—is both a letting go of everything and a reaching out well beyond your grasp. Julia Cameron’s Morning Pages and John Tarrant’s koans are wonderful practices for letting go to let your spark shine through.

Finding your North Star is a practice for reaching out in such a way that the gravity of your star becomes inexorable—pulling you into your dreams.

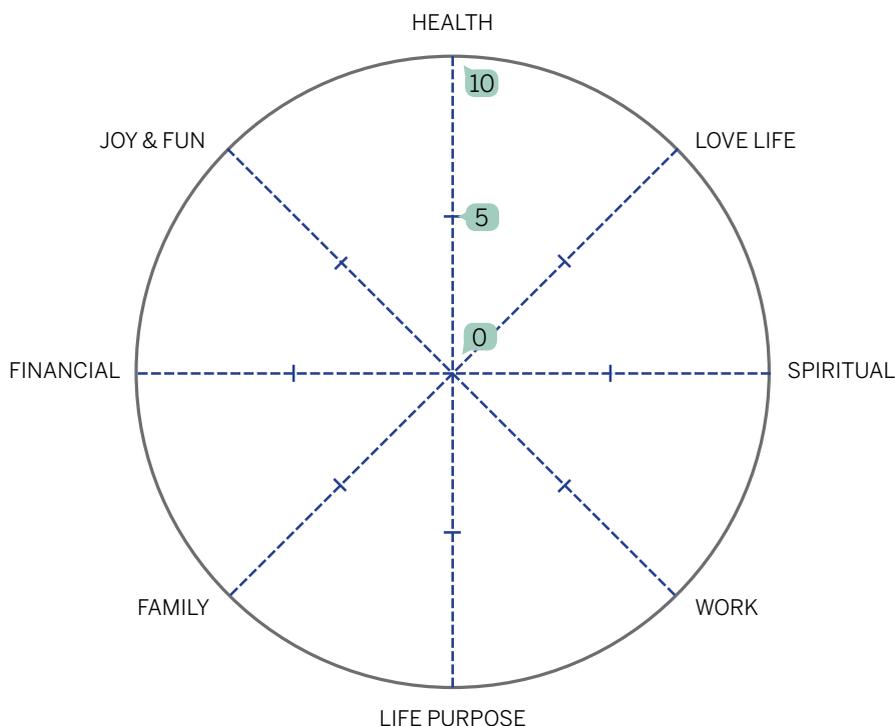
The practice has been adapted from a management tool created by Matthew Cross (leadershipalliance.com), a business consultant and workshop leader we first wrote about in 2002. This tool has proven invaluable to executives who need to set priorities for running large corporations, but it’s also useful for the kind of searching that leads to personal healing and an enhanced sense of aliveness. Try this at night as fuel for your Morning Pages. Use it as you explore your own Strategic Aging plan. It may also help you beat the odds if you need a “miracle” cure.

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Take Your Bearings . . .



STEP 1: Acknowledge where you are beating yourself up.

Place a bold dot on the axis line of each category, indicating how satisfied you are with that aspect of your life. (0=low, 5=average, 10=perfect) Then connect the dots to reveal your present sense of where you are.

STEP 2: Raise the question that matters most.

What are the key issues that must be addressed in order for you to enjoy great fulfillment? Complete your question by adding your chosen focus, such as “in my health,” “in my marriage,” “in my spiritual life,” and so on. Typically people frame their first question around the life issue where they scored themselves lowest. Select any area of your life—or your whole life.

STEP 3: Write five diverse answers to your question.

For each answer use a total of five to nine words that begin with “I must.” Phrase each answer in a positive way, and test each answer with your heart. Do you feel a lift? If the answer is dead for you, choose another.

- A. I must _____
- B. I must _____
- C. I must _____
- D. I must _____
- E. I must _____

STEP 4: Prioritize your answers.

(1 is very important and 5 is less important).

A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____ E _____

STEP 5: Copy answers A and B onto your North Star Locator.

Look at the two answers and ask yourself whether they are related or should be. If so, complete the dotted line between the two. (If they are not related, skip to step 6.) If you can complete the line between them, then ask yourself which answer drives the other? In other words, which is the root and which is the fruit? Fill in the arrow to show which drives the other. Only fill in one arrow. (Hint: If you can’t decide which is the driver, choose the one closer to your heart.)

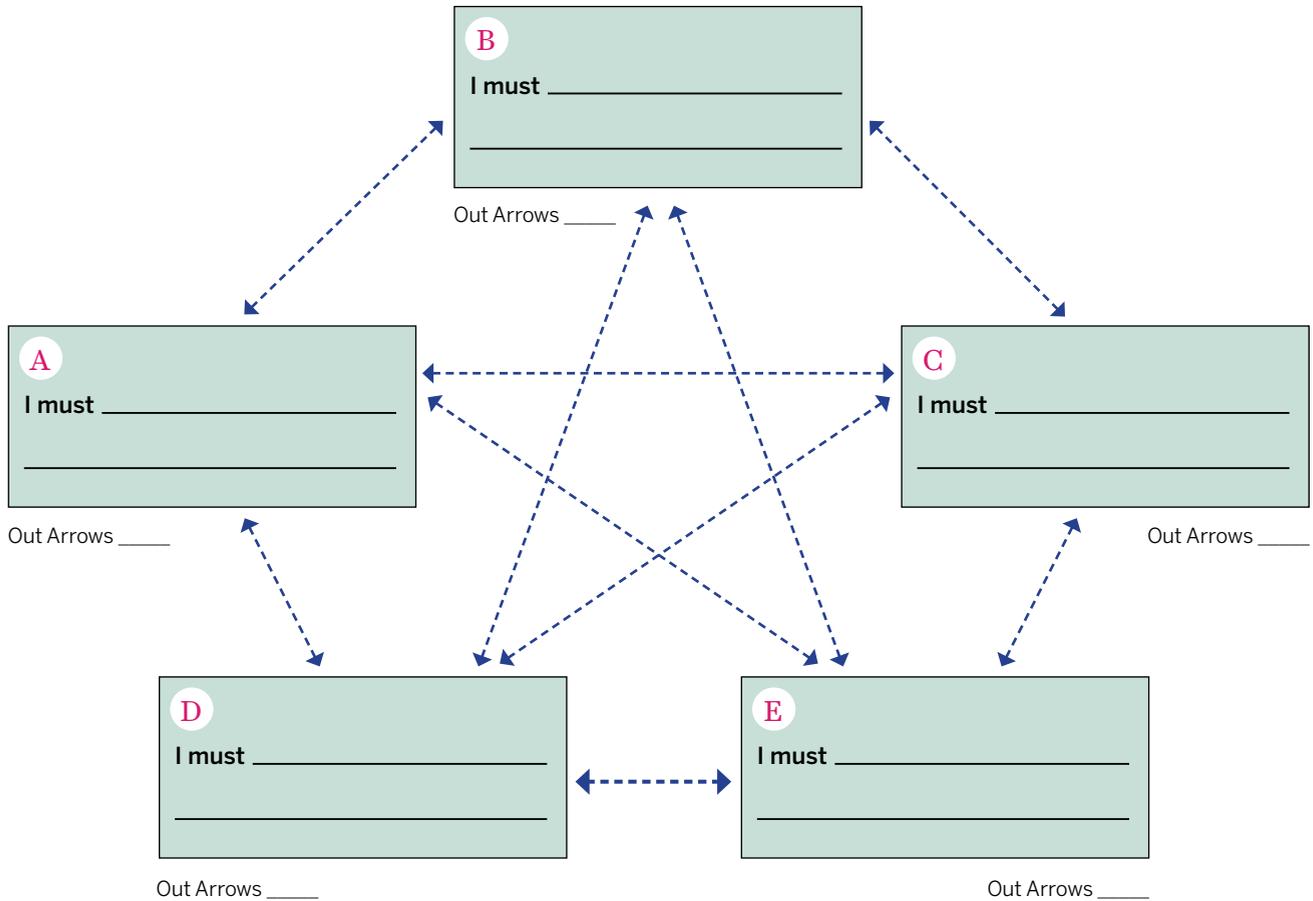
STEP 6: Copy answer C onto your North Star Locator.

Ask yourself whether A and C are related. If so, complete the dotted line. Then decide which is the driver and complete the arrow. Next, consider answers B and C. Are they related? Which is the driver?

STEP 7: Copy answer D onto your North Star Locator.

Working clockwise around the diagram, decide if there is a relationship and which is the driver between D and A? D and B? D and C?

to Find Your North Star



STEP 8: Copy answer E onto your North Star Locator.

Working clockwise around the diagram, consider the relationships between E and A, E and B, E and C, E and D. Where there is a relationship or ought to be, fill in the dotted line and then the arrow. (Hint: If you can't immediately see a relationship, ask yourself whether relating one issue to another would help to support your desired outcome.)

STEP 9: Count your arrows.

For each box, count the number of arrows Out. Each arrow Out is worth one point. Now rank your answers with your highest score as #1 and your lowest score as #5. If there is a tie, the one that drives the other ranks higher. If there is a tie and neither drives the other, use your heart to decide which ranks higher.

FINAL RANK

1. I must _____
2. I must _____
3. I must _____
4. I must _____
5. I must _____

STEP 10: Interpret your results.

Answers #1 and perhaps #2 are your primary drivers. They represent the driving, critical issues that will best support your desired state's coming into being. These top drivers should be where you spend most of your energy to live the question you created for yourself.

Answers #3 and #4 typically represent a state of action. If you put your focus on the primary drivers (#1 and #2), you will be more inspired and better able to accomplish these two. #5 is typically the outcome, what you will get if you put your energy into the preceding drivers with a top-down focus.

Chances are your initial ranking will not be the same as your final ranking. That's because most people never really clarify or objectively evaluate their priorities, which all too often leads them into a well-intended yet misplaced focus on the wrong ones. That's often why people face the same problems again and again. If your final ranking is different from your initial ranking, and you take your results seriously, you'll likely discover that life becomes more fulfilling.

Stephen Kiesling is editor in chief of S&H. Find Your North Star is adapted from the work of business consultant Matthew Cross at leadershipalliance.com.