**The Obituary Exercise**

Imagine your time has come, sadly and you need to write your own obituary. What will it say? To help you reflect deeply on what is really important to you, pause, contemplate and answer the following questions:

* What have been your main accomplishments in life? Once you’ve listed them, examine what connects them.
  + Being a swim team captain in high school and on the summer swim team
  + Being voted most memorable as a senior superlative out of 450 students within the senior class
  + Living in Amsterdam by myself for 5 months
  + Getting into the Farmer School of Business
* What has been your greatest achievement of all? Why did you pick this one?
  + Thriving while abroad in Amsterdam because I had little help but was very every day being independent and looking at the bigger picture of life and enjoyment
* Who are you leaving behind, and who will miss you the most? What will they miss you for?
  + My family and pets
  + I’ll miss my mom and dad and Omi, and my sister
  + Omi will miss me for caring about her and making sure she is smiling
  + Steph for helping to listen with mom and dad
  + Dad for helping to cope with mom
* Why have you been attracted to your career/profession?
  + I have been good at math most of my life
  + There is not a bunch of reading comprehension involved with numbers
* List the people you’ve helped in your life. How did you help them?
  + My brother Mitch
    - He helps to not blow things out of the water
  + My sister
    - For realizing mom and dad aren’t always right and I don’t need to follow their rules
* What has been the main question that life has asked you? How did you respond?
  + How will I add value to this world?

In the process of answering these “deep” questions, values will surface. What should people really remember you for? That you excelled at project management, developing marketing strategies or building new customer software. Probably not, right? It is not that your day job/career is not important, but your life has more depth than that – in what way? What will your friends, associates, family, fellow-workers, etc. miss you for?

Make a list of values that emerge from this exercise. When you’re finished, check it out for authenticity. The list should not represent what you think you should say. The value needs to feel like your favorite shoes – they need to fit just perfectly. Eliminate any values that are not a good fit, although they may look wonderful on paper.

Now, take your edited list through a final reduction. Evaluate each value by asking yourself – In the one life you’ve been given on this earth, is this value important enough to be remembered for? The final list should be five core values.

**Now, take the true core values of your life and define what each one means for you – not your friends, parents, etc. What do they mean for you?**

**After defining your core values, reflect on how the values define your “voice.” In one/two paragraphs, describe your “voice.”**

**Finally, what value must you focus on to live a professional/personal life with extraordinary purpose? Why?**