

How To Make Your Own Personal Vow

1) Who am I? [When you answer this question think of when you were a child and had dreams and passionate activities. Think of your job and what do you chose to study or to work on outside your job? What do you look forward to the most? Who are you when you are doing that thing?]

2) Of all your qualities, which are the three that you hold most dear? (You might list your qualities, all of them, and then select the three from there.)

3) Of all your skills, list the ones that are most valuable to you.

4) Are you a heart person or mind person? Of the two Ways do you fall toward compassion or wisdom?

5) Is your life already shaped around one certain path that you use as a mirror to see who you are? If not, do you see at least a general direction for this path? Each of us is unique. What are the most unique things about you?

6) What has been your "training?" [When I say "training" I mean Katagiri's "bamboo stick". In other words a time, like in the military, say, where you are forced to conform to a set of rules that supersede your personal preferences. It could be a job, school, becoming an artist or athlete or musician. "Training" means intense practice, day in and day out, of not leisurely doing what you want.]

7) In stories of people's lives, what tends to move you the most?

8) What would be slightly beyond what you consider your capabilities in the area that you have identified as your direction?

9) How would you describe the main obstacles on your path, or if you don't have a path, the main obstacles in forming one? You might even do an inventory of your obstacles over the course of your lifetime to see if there are patterns that are even now hampering you.

10) What on your deathbed will be unbearable to think that you have not accomplished?

Now draft a vow around which you might organize the rest of your life. It should be very personal to you and touch you so deeply that you are inspired daily to do the practices that you've chosen to strengthen your connection with this promise to yourself.