

**THE 4<sup>TH</sup>  
BRICKLAYER**

**BY DR. ERIC M. STOFMAN**

**VOL. III**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Bricklayer

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Dr. Eric M. Stofman

1040 Kings Highway North

Suite 101

Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

[emshealthcoach@comcast.net](mailto:emshealthcoach@comcast.net)

856-649-4516

# PART I

## THE TIMELESS STORY OF THE THREE BRICKLAYERS.




*“The one who plants trees, knowing that he will never sit  
in their shade, has at least started to understand the  
meaning of life.” – Rabindranath Tagore*





A traveler walks down the road, and he comes across a man laying bricks. He asks the first bricklayer:

*What are you doing?*

 I'm laying bricks.

An honest answer to an honest question. Only having just begun his journey, the traveler moves along a bit further down the road, and sees another man laying bricks. He asks the second bricklayer:

*What are you doing?*

  I am building a wall. It's going to be exactly 4' 2" tall. At the corner, it's going to turn at a 47° angle, travel around for another 2 1/2 feet and end with rounded bullnose bricks.

Well, that is a completely different answer to the same question. Now intrigued and feeling not fully satisfied, the traveler keeps going, and comes across another man laying bricks. He asks the third bricklayer:

*What are you doing?*

   I am building a Holy Temple, where people will come to worship their Lord for the next 1000 years.

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Let's circle back, dig in, and dissect out the timeless lessons built into the original story: The tool set. The skill set. The mindset.

All three bricklayers were using the same tool set. They each had the finest bricks, the strongest mortar, and the most advanced trowel. They all had the same skill set. They were all master masons. Each one had many decades of experience.

What then, was the defining characteristic that separated one bricklayer's experience from that of the others?

It was their mindset. Their perception. Their awareness. Their purpose. Not the *what* (bricks) or the *how* (technique), but rather, the *why*!

🧱 The first bricklayer's mindset could be described as, "task oriented." He was laying bricks, and from the looks of it, he was doing an amazing job. You may know people like this at your worksite, in your social life, in your family, or on your athletic teams. They do what they are asked. They do what is expected. They check all the boxes. They punch the clock on time. They file the papers. They might be highly skilled at doing so.

I am reminded of Carl Jung's archetypes that I shared in [You Are Not Your Diagnosis](#) (Vol. I): *The Athlete. The Warrior. The Statesperson. The Spirit*. Wayne Dyer often described these as Levels of Awareness. Knowing how our nervous systems continually perceive, absorb, process and respond to the environment, every moment we are alive, I referred to these as dynamic components

## of Our Evolving Filter.

The fact that the first bricklayer was task oriented did not make him a bad, evil, or less-valued human being. In fact, at different times in our lives, or even at different times within the same day, we could find ourselves drifting and shifting between a task-oriented mindset to one of the others that will be described below. It's not a value judgment, nor a matter of better or worse. The three bricklayers and the four archetypes are simply elegant constructs that allow us to become more *aware* of our moment-by-moment *Modus Operandi*.




### **The 4<sup>th</sup> bricklayer has entered the chat:**

*“Stop measuring days by the degree of productivity and start experiencing them by the degree of awareness.” –*

*Alan Watts*



 The second bricklayer was asked the same, simple question. Yet the answer was dramatically different. The second bricklayer was, in fact, “goal oriented.” His descriptions of his activity and his intended outcome were so specific, they were most likely written down somewhere. It's like he had them memorized... like he knew them *by heart*.

Perhaps he was working from a pre-approved blueprint: Knowing exactly how high the wall was going to be. Knowing exactly how far down at the corner it was going to make a turn. Knowing exactly how far the rest of the wall would go. Knowing exactly what type of bricks he would use, etc.

The second bricklayer was vibrating at a different level of consciousness than the first. Even though they were *doing* the same activity, they were *being* different. They were processing their work through a different filter: a different way of seeing the world, and their role in it.



**The 4<sup>th</sup> bricklayer has entered the chat:**

*“We don’t see the world as it is.*

*We see the world as we are.”- Anaïs Nin*



Many years after first hearing the story of the three bricklayers, I realized there are hidden, critical nuances buried within the *MO* of the second bricklayer. It’s subtle and lurks below the surface. Once you see it though, you can’t *unsee* it.

There are, in fact, two types of second bricklayers: Let’s call them, 2-E and 2-I. Each is goal oriented. Each clearly knows what they’re working on. Each is

‘beginning with the end in mind,’ as Stephen Covey would say.

2-E, however, is Extrinsically motivated. 2-E is building a perfect wall with perfect skill. 2-E is building it though, because *someone else* told them it was important to do so. 2-E is working on *someone else's* goals: a concept commonly referred to as, a job.

For 2-E, external rewards and punishments are driving the whole operation: *Getting paid enough not to quit. Working hard enough to not get fired.* Over time, this may be painfully disempowering. Ultimately, it can be downright exhausting. 2-E very often feels busy but never seems to get ahead. All the while, interestingly, from the outside, 2-E may be perceived as highly successful.

The entirety of Willpower vs. The Power of Willingness (Vol. II) lays out the joy-filled, empowering, and step-by-step process of flipping a 2-E bricklayer into a 2-I bricklayer. That is, of course, if a 2-E bricklayer is *willing*. I am a little tempted to have you go back and (re)read Vol. II right now. I just re-read it myself! If you decide to as well, pay particular attention to the section on FOCUS.

2-I is Intrinsically motivated. You might say, *inspired*. 2-I clearly knows **what** they want AND clearly knows **why** they want it. 2-I is *invigorated* by the work. Even if

2-I is working in a traditional ‘carrot & stick’ extrinsic environment, they remain *independent* of the drama that often swirls around them. 2-I rarely seems tired, and 2-I moves with alacrity.

You may know people who light up the room when they *leave*... 2-I lights up the room when they *enter*. 2-I, however, can't be pigeon-holed as an introvert or extrovert. One day, they could be holding court in the center of a big crowd, and the next, you might find them off to the side, in quiet observation-mode. Either way, they always have a twinkle in their eye.



#### **The 4<sup>th</sup> bricklayer has entered the chat:**

*“Think from the end. Contemplate yourself as already surrounded by the conditions you intend to produce.” – Wayne Dyer*

*“When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds: Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be.” – Pantanjali*

*“If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has*

*imagined/intended, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. ... In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty, poverty, nor weakness, weakness.” – Henry*

*David Thoreau*



The 2-I bricklayer is on the path to manifesting their deepest desires and destiny. Having taken the important first step of getting in touch with their own heart's desires: they are continually forming a clear vision of what they truly want to create in their own lives *and* share with the world.

2-I often chooses to practice meditation/quiet contemplation. They do so, in order continue to expand their awareness of their *infinite* potential, as they cultivate the **focus**, **intuition** and **imagination** that helps bring their dreams to fruition.



**The 4<sup>th</sup> bricklayer has entered the chat:**

*“Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions.” – Albert Einstein*



Focusing their *intention* on what they want, rather than on what they don't want, generates a field of awareness that feels whole, content and complete. If

they want a new job that allows them to express their creativity, while receiving abundant compensation, they set that as their goal.

Whatever they put their attention on expands in their experience. Once they have set clear *intentions*, they can take steps to bring their vision to life: connecting to the *inner* wisdom that is both the source, and the fulfillment of their desire. They tune into their imagination as form of *intelligence* that goes beyond the rational mind.

*Intention*, *Intuition* and *Imagination* are contextual, relational and holistic. They are attributes of the soul and do not function in a win-lose orientation.

Imagination eavesdrops on the mind of the universe, giving access to an *infinite* source of possibilities. Tuning into imagination, 2-I can experience flashes of *insight* and quantum leaps of creativity that the logical, linear mind cannot make. They can feel their way through life, trusting their hunches and staying open and flexible, instead of rigidly sticking to a plan.

Focus, *Intuition* and *Imagination* aren't special gifts. We all have these abilities. We can cultivate them and use them to manifest our desires and fulfill our destiny.

Often, we are unaware of the messages our imagination is sending us, because they are clouded by our fear, worry, judgementalness, agitation, anger, and the myriad forms of emotional mismanagement.

During meditation/times of quiet contemplation, we can go beyond our noisy mental turmoil, into *inner* quiet and stillness. In the pure clarity of silence, our imagination awakens and guides us into spontaneously making the most evolutionary choices.

The mantra/affirmation of a fully self-actualized 2-I is, “I am focused upon what I want. I am focused upon what I want.”




**The 4<sup>th</sup> bricklayer has entered the chat:**

*“Silence is God’s one and only voice.” – Herman Melville*

*“Music is the space between the notes.” – Claude Debussy*



 Remember the third bricklayer? While the tool set and skill set were identical to the first two, the answer to the traveler’s question was immeasurably different. The third bricklayer is “mission based/legacy driven.”

*(To best explain the legacy driven mindset, I point you toward the writings of Stephen Covey. Along with Wayne Dyer, Covey’s influence has served as the not-so-inconspicuous underpinning of everything that I have written. The following is no different.)*

The Whole Person Paradigm: To Live, To Learn, To Love, *To Leave a Legacy*

At the center of human life is a profound and enduring truth: we are not fragmented beings pursuing isolated goals, but integrated, whole persons called to grow in body, mind, heart, and spirit. These four needs are universal, timeless, and interdependent, forming the foundation of a life that is not only successful, but deeply meaningful.

The need To Live speaks first to the physical dimension of our humanity: the body that carries us through all of life's experiences. Our bodies are not merely instruments to be used; they are gifts to be cared for, strengthened, and respected. When a person exercises regularly, eats with mindfulness, gets adjusted, and cultivates healthy habits (Move Well, Eat Well, Sleep Well), they are not simply going on a diet, or treating a disease. They are honoring the vehicle through which they serve, create, and love.

A strong body alone does not define a whole person. The need To Learn engages the mental dimension: the mind that seeks understanding, meaning, and growth. Learning is not confined to classrooms or degrees; it is a lifelong process of expanding awareness, sharpening discernment, and deepening wisdom. Through study, creativity, and disciplined thinking, individuals strengthen their ability to solve problems, adapt to change, and see possibilities where others see obstacles (Think Well). Just as the body requires daily nourishment, the mind requires regular renewal

through reading, contemplation, and meaningful dialogue. When the mind grows, the person grows.

Intelligence without integration is incomplete, as human life is fundamentally relational. The need To Love represents the emotional and social dimension of the heart: to cultivate relationships grounded in trust, respect, connection and compassion. It is the parent who listens patiently to a child, the friend who offers presence in times of struggle, and the colleague who chooses collaboration over competition. Love is expressed through understanding, kindness, and service, recognizing that our greatest fulfillment often comes not from what we achieve, but from how we treat others. Strong relationships require courage and vulnerability: the willingness to communicate honestly, to forgive generously, and to seek understanding before being understood. When the heart is nurtured, individuals experience belonging, emotional safety, and the joy of meaningful connection.

Above and beyond body, mind, and heart lies the highest dimension of human nature: the need To Leave a Legacy, rooted in spirit( 卐 卐 卐 The Third Bricklayer). This is the realm of purpose, values, and meaning: the inner compass that guides our choices and shapes our character. Leaving a legacy is not about fame, wealth, or recognition. Through how we live, it is about the imprint we leave on people and the world. The spiritual dimension calls individuals to align their lives

with timeless principles such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, and service. It invites reflection on fundamental questions: What do I stand for? Who am I becoming? What difference do I make? When the person lives from the spirit, their actions are infused with purpose, their relationships with sincerity, and their contributions with lasting impact.

# PART II

## CORE VALUES SELF-ASSESSMENT.



*If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them. – Henry David Thoreau*

*“Happiness is the genuine and ongoing feeling of joy and peace of mind. It is the result of living in accordance with your values.” – Bob Burg*



Whatever it is that we choose to build, it behooves us to build it upon the strongest foundation possible. Values-Based decision making goes a long way to that end. Our values are the big boulders that we can set in the ground first. They are the footers, the keystones, the cornerstones, etc.

Often, our own values are not easily enunciated or identifiable. They don't, in-and-of-themselves, come up in conversation. Ironically, it is often easier to identify the individuals, or the behaviors of those individuals, that do NOT resonate with the deep-seated essence inside of us. They just give us the *heebie-jeebies* or the *willies*! Sometimes we can't put our finger on it, or verbalize why we feel the way we do, but most likely it is the result of being faced with a situation that is antithetical to our own values.

On the other hand, there are times when we instantly connect with someone, or a group of *someones*. It becomes important to us, almost immediately, to find every way possible, over the course of our lives, to stay connected with them. This is most likely the result of a situation that is in resonance with our own values. They may not match exactly, but they line up with ours... just so.

The following exercise may give you more clarity on this subject. Let's take the next 10-20 minutes to participate in some priceless introspection. Let's

identify your core values. If, when you have completed this process, you see *value* in it, I hope you will share it with others.

Step 1. Grab a pen. Rather quickly (2 or 3 minutes **at the most**, without over-thinking or letting yourself slide into judgementalness) while reading through the following 100+ *values*, circle or put a check-mark next to the 20, or 30 **at the most**, that really resonate and seem to be really important to **you**. Everyone who does this will predictably have a unique set of 20 or 30. Make sense?

The next steps will be explained below the end of this list. GO!

- Family
- Honesty
- Freedom
- Security
- Loyalty
- Intelligence
- Connection
- Creativity
- Humanity
- Success
- Respect
- Invention
- Diversity
- Generosity
- Integrity
- Involvement
- Faith
- Wisdom
- Beauty
- Caring
- Personal Development
- This Too Shall Pass Attitude
- Adventure
- Kindness
- Teamwork
- Career
- Communication
- Learning

- Finesse
- Love
- Openness
- Religion
- Order
- Advancement
- Respect
- Joy
- Forgiveness
- Work Smarter  
& Harder
- Excitement
- Change
- Goodness
- Love of Career
- Friendship
- Relationship
- Encouragement
- Pride in Your  
Work
- Clarity
- Fun-Loving
- Charisma
- Humor
- Leadership
- Renewal
- Home
- Empowerment
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Quality
- Commonality
- Contribution
- Spiritualism
- Strength
- Entertain
- Wealth
- Speed
- Power
- Affection
- Abundance
- Cooperation
- Wellness
- Finances
- Gratitude
- Grace
- Endurance
- Facilitation
- Effectiveness
- Fun
- Fame
- Justice
- Appreciation
- Willingness
- Trusting Your  
Gut

- Be True
- Contentment
- Friendship
- Courage
- Balance
- Compassion
- Fitness
- Professionalism
- Relationship
- Knowledge
- Patience
- Change
- Prosperity
- Giving People a Chance
- Patience
- Forgiveness
- Self-Respect
- Reciprocity
- Enjoyment
- Entrepreneurial
- Happiness
- Harmony
- Peace
- Play

OK.

Step 2. Take up to 3 minutes **at the most** and go back to the ones you circled or checked and **ILIMINATE** all but 10+/- of them. Keeping the most important 10+/-, **at the most**.

GO!

ONLY when you have about 10 remaining, turn to the last page of this book. **NO** cheating... unless, of course, *cheating* is one of your core values ;).

When you are all done, come back. The 4<sup>th</sup> bricklayer awaits.

# PART III

## A CONVERSATION WITH THE 4<sup>TH</sup> BRICKLAYER



*“Values in action are Virtues.”*

*– Stephen Covey*



The traveler keeps going and comes across another man laying bricks. They have a conversation that changes everything. (*As you read the following, feel welcome to insert your own personal Core Values.*)

*Here I am.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ Wonderful to see you. Have you completed your Core Values Assessment?

*Yes.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ Super. Let's say hypothetically, that one of your Core Values is Abundance, and another one is Joy.

*Sounds good.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ So, in this scenario, is your model of abundance describing a viewpoint, that you have so much more than you need, that you could give it away... knowing always, that it will all come back around, ten-fold? That life is not a finite pie with a limited number of slices... that if someone else gets a big slice, your slice will not be diminished? That the Law of Receptivity proves that the key to effective giving is staying open to receiving? That would be considered an abundant person, yes?

*Absolutely.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ Now, considering your experience of

abundance in this experiment we call life, do you think it is possible that a person can continue to grow beyond living as an *angry*, abundant person?

*Of course.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ When you developed that mindset of abundance, there were certain skills and habits and choices and traits that you mastered. You get to take those with you! You get to take those with you to the *next* dream. **If you're not being divined by a vision of your future, then you're only left to the memories of your past... and you'll be predictable your life.** Here's the rub though: It is so much easier to forget that vision than to remember it. That means you gotta make time to remember it. You gotta make time to decide who you are *no longer* going to be, and you gotta make time for who you *are* going to be. So, you see, this experiment can continue and continue... and by the way, you should be facing adversity.

*Wait... I should be what?*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ **You should be facing adversity in the midst of change.**

*It shouldn't be easy?*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ **It should be earned.**

*Earned?*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ **It should be earned, because that means you put the time in.** This is how greatness is created: When you show up to create even when you don't feel like it.

*Ah.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ When you sit with yourself and *not* allow your mind to go to the past, and all the problems, and all the 'things'... and you instruct your mind to go to that vision of the future. That's a victory.

*Sweet.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ That is the 'overcoming process.' We discovered that when you sit with yourself, and you go past the point where you, because of your disbelief, you would normally stop... and you go past that point, that's when the brain changes the most. That's when you're stepping into the unknown.

*What does that moment look like for people? What does all that mean?*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ That moment looks like, "I want to quit!" It looks like, "I want to give up!" That's the end point of your emotional belief. **But if you show up to be a creator in spite of those voices... in spite of the mismanagement of your attention and energy... or the feeling of not having enough time... or the**

feeling like something happened in your day that caused you to not want to create... the days that you show up anyway... and you remember the belief in your future. That is your passion. You will then earn that future. That is the overcoming process that allows you to become anything: abundant or joyful or healthy, or whatever it is that you want or *value*.

*What will ensure that we won't earn our future dreams?*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ I think people get in the habit of no longer believing in themselves. I think it's a habit, because they listen to the voices of blame, excuses and denial. They sit, and they can't settle their emotions down. They get up from their inner work believing *less* in their future instead of believing *more* in their future.

The people who actually sit and say, "I'm not getting up, until I remember my future... a future of ownership, accountability and responsibility... and I'm gonna become that very person today." The person who does that...they get up that way, they believe in their future *more*. In order to do that, they must overcome some aspect of themselves, and it doesn't take much. **But to the materialist, though, who's waiting for their life/circumstances to change on the outside before they can feel joy on the inside... the ones who must see it first, in order to believe it... they're missing out on a lot of life.** Why wouldn't you want to

teach your body emotionally what joy feels like, so that you can begin to feel that way? Nobody is gonna come and make you feel that way. You are the one who can choose to make you feel happy or abundant or empowered or...

*Ohhh.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ Imagine that!?! I swear to you, when you make this shift, some of the people in your life will wonder what ‘medication’ you're on! Just because you're not showing up as the memory they have of you. You're out of phase.

*Say that one more time.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ You are no longer showing up as the memory they have of you. That may be off-putting to them.

*Wow.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ We don't see reality how it is. We see reality how we are. That's really the truth. So you get to choose what thoughts you want to fire and wire together in your brain. A belief is simply a thought you keep thinking over, and over again. **With intention and attention, you keep installing the circuitry to remember to think that way. When you do, I swear, your biology will be mapped as a thought...**

**and that thought will be the new voice in your head that says, “I can!”**

*Thank you. I AM GRATEFUL that I didn't stop... that I kept traveling along this path. I AM APPRICIATIVE of the time you have spent with me.*

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ I am that, as well.

---

Step 3. Take 5 minutes **at the most** and go back to your top 10+/- that have made the cut thus far. **ILIMINATE** all but 3 or 4 of them. **4, at them most!** Write them here:



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

You are now looking in the mirror, and you look fantastic. My hope for you, as it was for me more than 20 years ago, is that these 3 or 4 words/phrases hit you deeply inside of your core... that reading each one out loud, gives you a *Full-Body* ‘Yes.’

I’ve had the pleasure of repeating this assessment nearly a dozen times during the last two decades. Every time, I ended up with the same 4. I believe that since I was a child, these core values have accompanied me on my journey. I believe yours have as well.



**The 4<sup>th</sup> bricklayer has entered the chat:**

*“We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.” – T.S. Eliot*



Welcome home. It’s time to turn to Part III and have a conversation with the 4<sup>th</sup> bricklayer.