

The Sustainable Life is a life of wholeness
... Do You live a Whole Life or do you have a Hole in your Life?

Ken Aitken May 2016

There are three important components of the sustainable life:

1.
Structure
to life

2.
Social
Network
to life

3.
Spirituality
to life

A Sustainable Life has the ability to be continually renewed and maintained everyday. Each of these components act like legs on a tripod which sit on large rock near the ocean. When the storms and waves of life of life come, if the legs are strong, the waves will go over you but you will sit firmly on the rock of life. If one of the legs is weak, the tripod of your life will fall over in what you could call an Unsustainable Life.

Structure to life: Gives order, direction, aims and achievable objectives i.e. overall purpose. This component has to do with our body and the fact that we have a mass weight. If we do not structure in our life, it is a bit like having a body without bones. We would never get off the ground.

Social Network to life: The people around us: the synergistic effect ... multiplication and complementary effect of effort: Family & friends, Clubs and Organisations, Associations, Churches, General Community, Work Colleagues. This component has to do with our emotions, our will and our mind and sharing these with other people.

Spirituality to life: Is the inner room of your life Answers such questions as: Who are we as people?, What is the meaning of life?, Am I significant?, What values should I live by?, Gives identity and destiny.

As I have a Christian Spirituality, the rock of life is God and his surety of life. Such a spirituality is central to my restoration in the last twenty years from a very severe brain injury. It is a very wholistic view on the whole of life of Inner, Middle and Outer Persons (Spirit, Soul and Body).

Inherent in this framework is an understanding of our uniqueness as a created being, sustained by a loving Creator. This is in contrast to seeing all of life as being hereby chance and evolution. It is interesting to see what the

late Sir Fred Hoyle one of Britain's best-known mathematicians and astronomers in the last half of the 20th century said:

'The notion that not only the biopolymer but the operating program of a living cell could be arrived at by chance in a primordial organic soup here on the Earth is evidently nonsense of a high order.'

Hoyle originated the famous illustration comparing the random emergence of even the simplest cell to the likelihood that 'a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein.' Hoyle also compared the chance of obtaining even a single functioning protein by chance combination of amino acids to a solar system full of blind men solving the Rubik's Cube simultaneously—see [Rubik's Cube and Blind Men](#). Some more problems with evolutionary 'origin-of-life' scenarios can be found in our Q&A pages under [Origin of Life](#) and [Probability](#).

With this view on life, life is here by blind chance. This is the opposite view on life where life is here by a personal presence behind the universe. There is a infinite - personal God behind the universe. This infinite - personal God comes to us to build a relationship with us. It isn't an infinite - impersonal energy force that you tap into.

Spirituality is implicit (inwardly self evident and undefined). It refers to how an individual lives meaningfully with the ultimate questions of life, his or her response to the deepest truths of the universe as he or she apprehends these. It answers such queries as:

- Who are we as a people?
- What is the meaning of life?
- What values should I live by?

Spirituality brings a sense of identity and when you have sense of identity, you then have a destiny or purpose in life. People who have no identity have no sense of purpose in life. They are continually looking for identity in other people. This way leads to very dysfunctional way of life. This paper looks at our sense of identity in further sections.

On the other hand, **Religion** is the antithesis of spirituality. It is explicit (outwardly evident and defined) and is marked by four things: a cult, creed, code (ethics) and community (which is more inward looking). It ends up being very law-centred Focussing on precise ways of living life ends up with very defined expectations and precise programs.

We are also like the vacuum cleaner nothing really happens in our life

until we are plugged into the vertical Universal Power Source which is God.

My Personal Experience with Sustainability:

My experience with sustainability initially began when I ran a small landscape design and construction company for 20 years from 1975 to December 1995, the year my severe brain injury. I did very creative, individual designer gardens for wealthy residential clients. I was more an artistic sort of person, a lateral thinker more artist than businessman. I was very concerned with sustainability in a gardening and agriculture sense can certain practices be maintained? is what you doing now, preparing the way ahead for new life? is this garden going to survive twenty years?

I thought of a landscape as would a sculptor in a solid medium, but I saw it as a three dimensional piece of space which people walked through. This space changed with time as it grew and changed with the time of day: shadows vs. sun patterns, boulders, colour, plants, trees, earth-forms, solid structures and water. These were the ingredients in a subtle flow of landscape design and construction. Rather an intangible product to sell and run a business with!! Out of this stage I built a structure for my life: my marriage with Harriet, business and the house plus we had a family.

In 1981, we built a unique natural house which people often come out to see. This is on our five acres of light open eucalypt bush at Chambers Flat, Brisbane. The house is largely of glass set into a post and lintel construction of 100-year old broadaxed timbers and sandstone walls. The total concept of indoor-outdoor flow, has a nice ambience to it and the design is unique and lends itself well to future development.

Harriet and I are into simplicity and recycling. We live in this amazing house built out of rejected materials for minimal in 1981 (34 years ago from 2015). See the house and garden on my new personal experiences website



Our house at Chambers Flat

- **OUR HOUSE** [An Overview](#)
- **OUR HOUSE** ... [The Actual Garden](#)

The Change:

I went from being:

- 1. Outer Physical Gardener** (Outer Sustainability) >>>>>>>>>>.
- 2. Inner Life Gardener** (Inner Sustainability)

1. Outer Physical Gardener (Outer Sustainability): In a gardening and agriculture sense can certain practices be maintained..... is what you doing now preparing the way ahead for new life? It was a very difficult business in which to make money, mainly due to the very non-standard and the seasonal nature of the work. My former life was not sustainable my creativity in my business couldn't be standardised vs. a successful business needs to be like a biscuit cutter Making a few \$\$ off large numbers of components.

This side of the accident since I was in hospital unintentionally from 8th December 1996 to now, I have really discovered people in a big way. I have really come to value people, no matter who they are, what they do or say. I have developed a passion to build inner community with many people around the world especially by e-mail. As I am on a permanently paid holiday through my life-long Income Protection, I have time to spend with people in a way I never could do in my busy business.

2. Inner Sustainability: In an ongoing personal sense Can your life be

maintained to? is what you doing now preparing the way ahead for new life? I have also discovered the significance of the Inner and Outer Life. Sustainability I have come to see, has to be a wholistic view on life of Inner, Middle and Outer Persons. Problems come because things do not change from the Outside to Inside but from the Inside to the Outside.

Inner and Outer Life:

Everyone of us has a private space in our lives that we carefully guard. I call it '**The Garden of Life**'. A garden is a personal space you can go out into and to enjoy the peace, the cool air, the shadows of trees, the sun shining with translucent light through tree leaves and palm fronds, the perfume of beautiful blossoms.

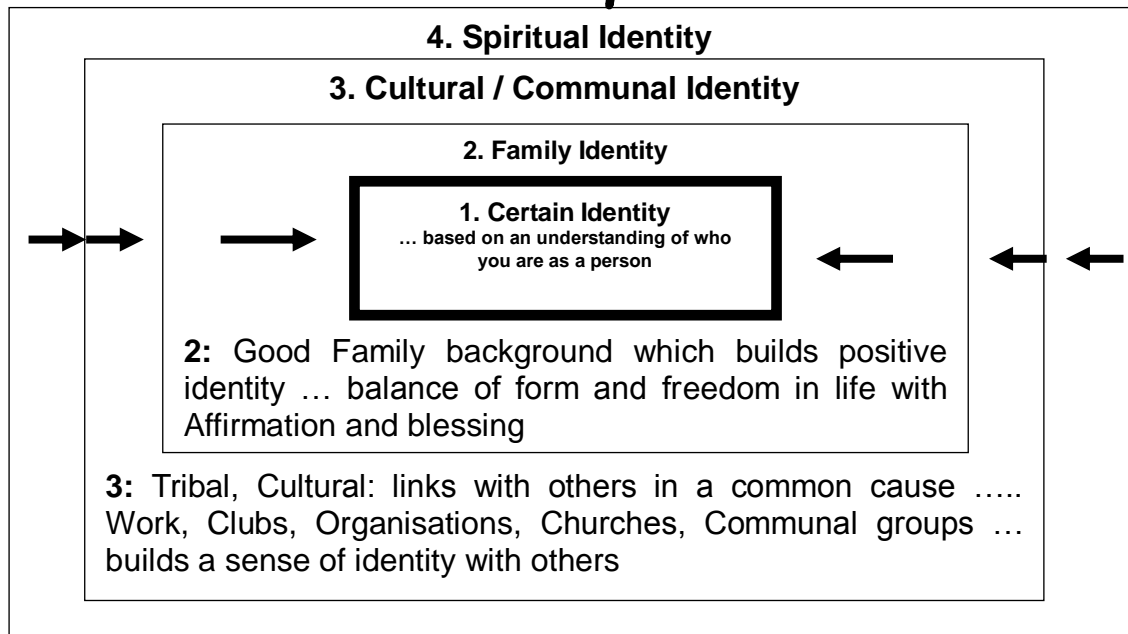
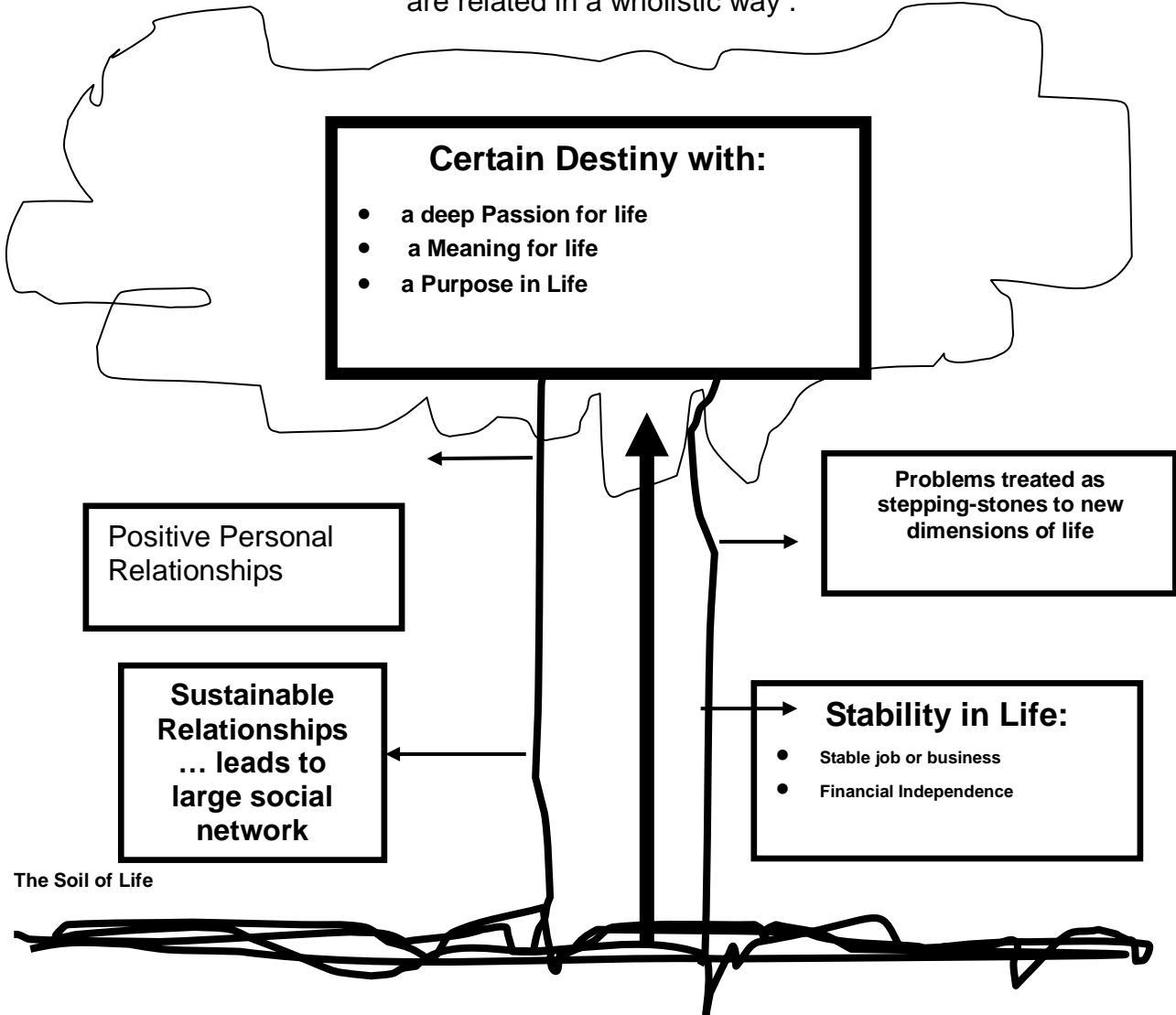
No one else comes there except yourself and your family. Even friends do not just drop in. They are invited out there with you after you have let them into your house. Strangers who come are intruders and will be dwelt with by the police.

It is the same with relationships. You have to enter someone's inner life with their consent. You do this by placing great value on the person and listening intently to what they say, as though it is absolutely important. By listening intently (consciously in a rational way and unconsciously with your intuition), you are as it were gently knocking on the door of their inner house. If that person trusts you, they will then invite you into the garden of their life. Then you can talk gently back and forth and then you have established a relationship with them. They will open their door of their inner life at a later time if you knock. To keep that process going is a Sustainable Relationship. If I act suspiciously or try and crash the door with a sledge hammer, I will not be let in. That is what I call an Unsustainable Relationship.

Reduce the magnification to 75% if you are reading this paper on your computer at this point to get the best viewing results.

The Sustainable Life:

Life is like a tree with roots and fruits
whereby Person - Family - Community – Universe
are related in a wholistic way .



The Unsustainable Life:

Life is like a tree with roots and fruits

Leads to:

- Loss of financial independence
- Low self esteem
- Feels a victim of life vs. a victor in life
- Hopelessness and negativity
- Frustration with life
- Anger and resentment
- Gives up ... sits in existence mode
- Thinks about suicide or may even try it
- Uncertain or negative relationships with people
- Lets life happen vs. making it happen
- Uses a job as a structure to escape from life can even be a workaholic to escape from the uncertainties of life
- Can lead to substance abuse with alcohol or drugs
- May even lead to risk taking behaviours which can lead to accidents and resulting in injuries such as an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

Uncertain Destiny leading to:

- No Passion for life
- No Meaning for life
- No Purpose in Life

Hopeless Patterns of life: which do not work in the end

Unstable:

- Not in control of circumstances
- Circumstances in charge of you

Problems Treated: as tombstones rather than steppingstones to new dimensions of life

The Soil of Life

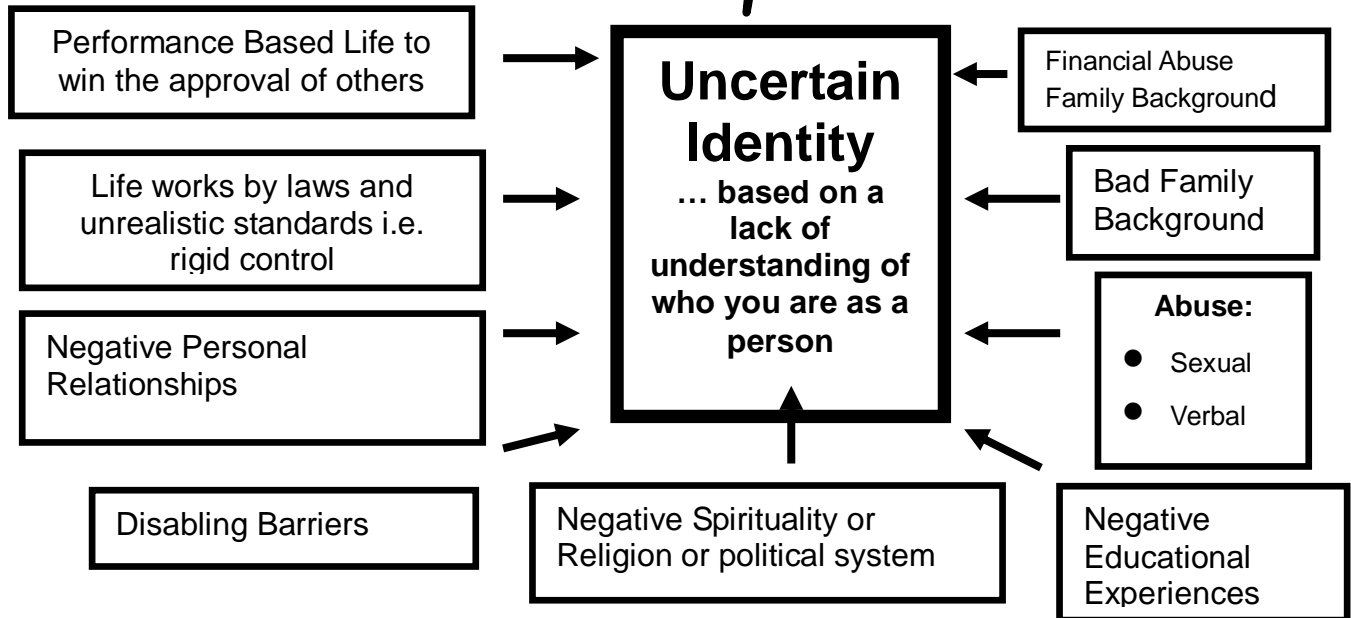
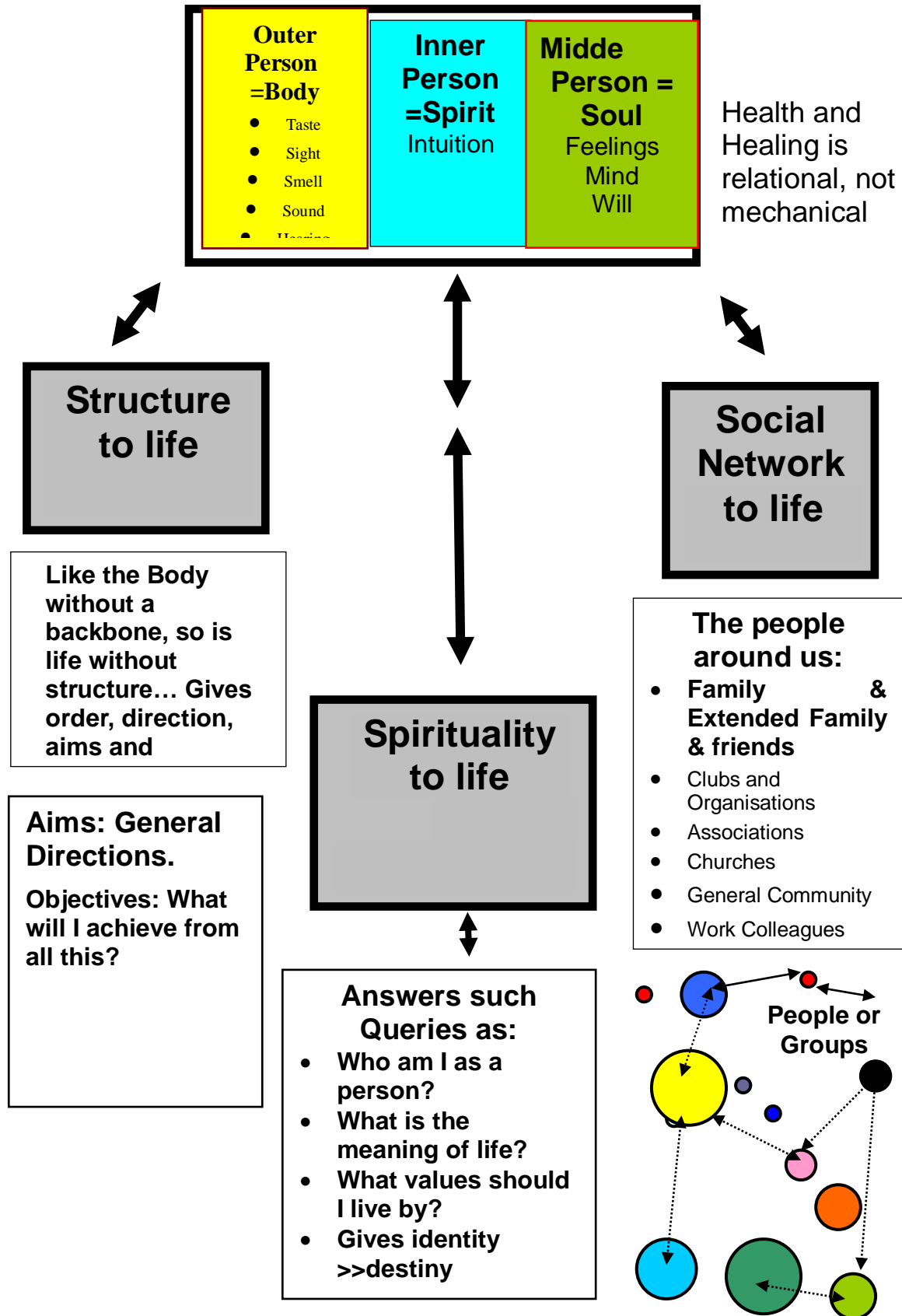
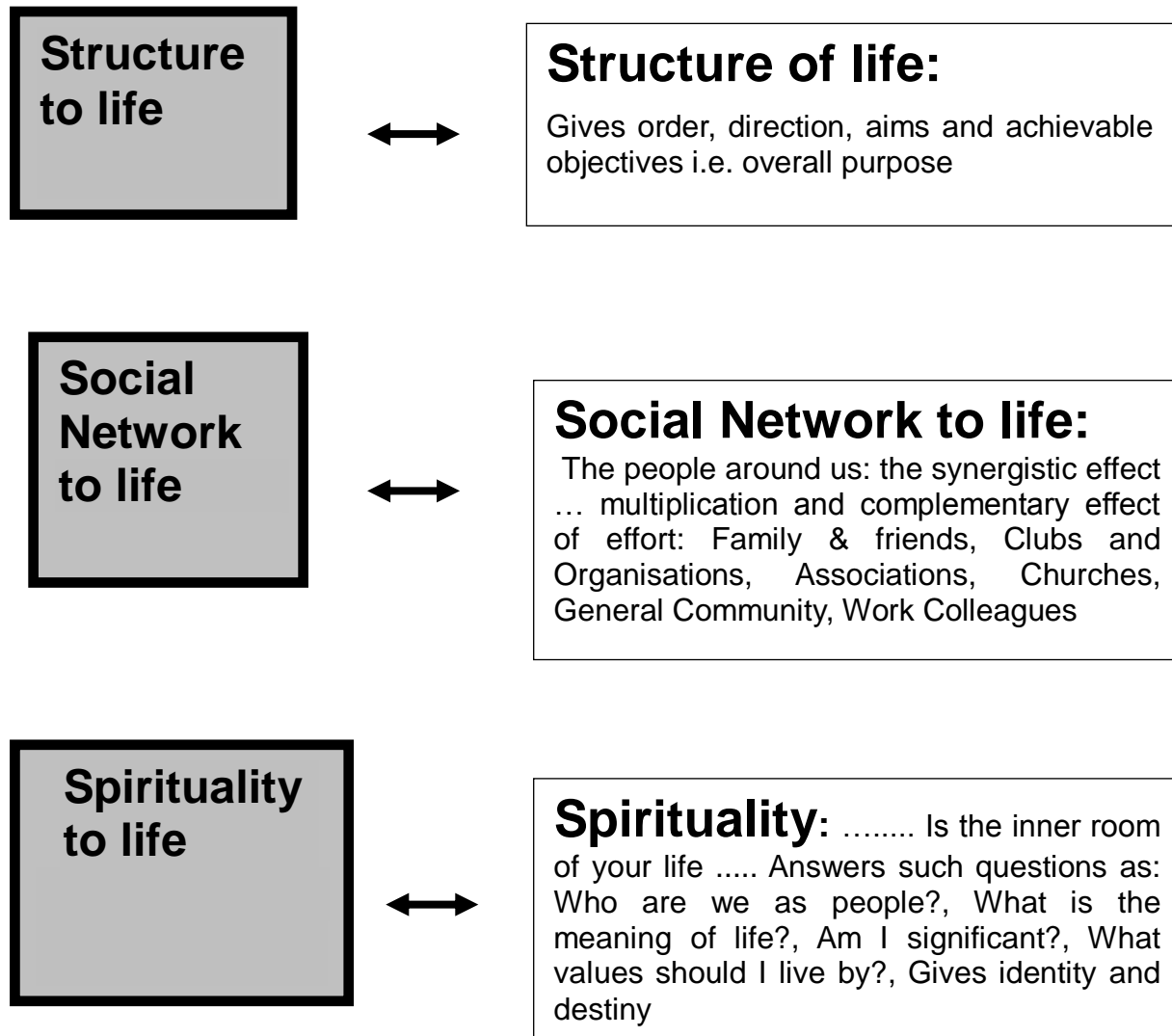


Diagram of a Sustainable Life:

Wholistic Health: beyond a brain injury
The Whole Person



The Sustainable Life Explanation:



To have structure, a spirituality and a social network is vital for healing and for maintaining wholistic health.

.... Dimensions of Life ...

.... the importance of identity determines our destiny ...

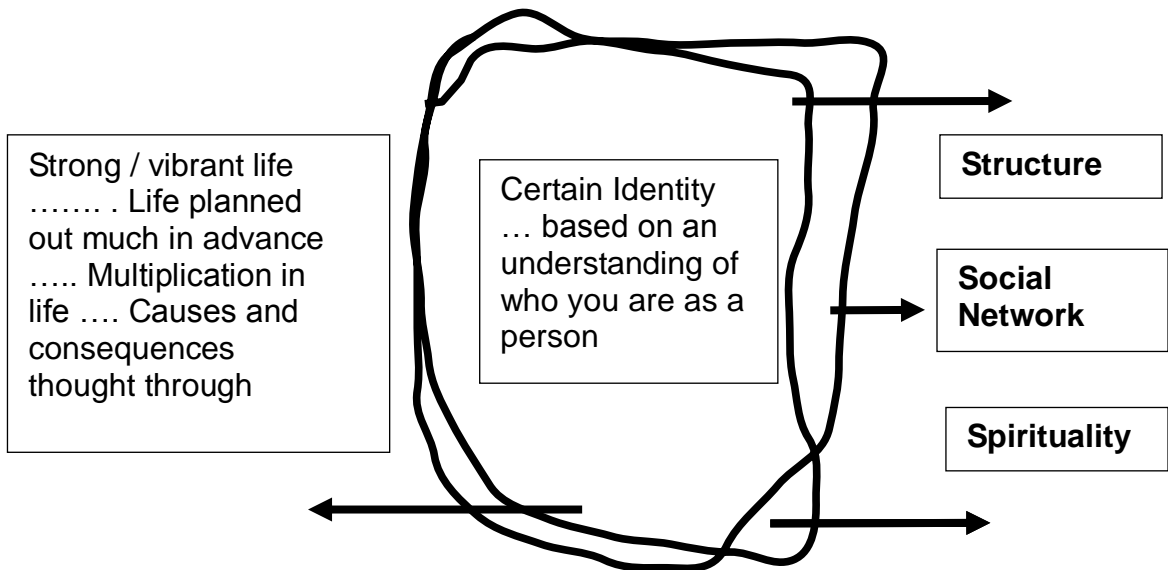
This paper now looks at some dimensions in life in diagrammatic form which are foundational to the successful or maintainable, sustainable life. That is important as having a clear identity of who you are as a person is consequentially linked with your life destiny, your end purpose in life.

This is a fundamental question for all of us as identity for many people in our culture is linked and dependent on what other people think about us and our achievements in life i.e. is performance based. When your ability to perform is taken from you by through loss of an important relationship, injury or age, disruption of your life is a major consequence. To have an identity not based on performance is vital for a continuing successful life.

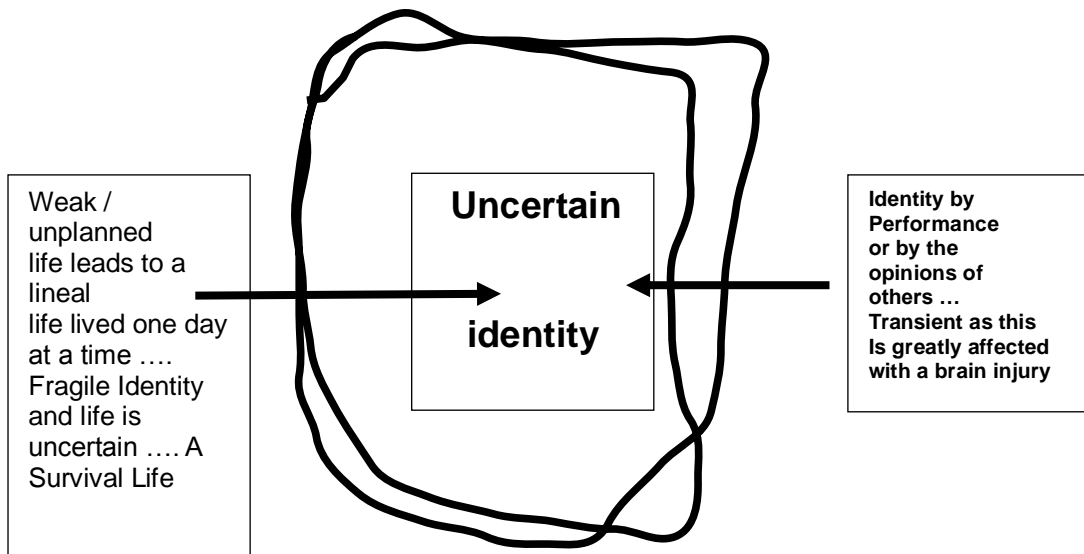
The diagrams over the page describe 'The Progression of Identity' and 'Two kinds of Identity'

Two kinds of Identity:

Inside – Out Identity: life comes from inside a person to flow outwards



Outside – In Identity: life comes from outside a person to flow inwards



Our Identity:

In entering into a sustainable life, there are definite consequences which come about in people's lives. I have definitely experienced this since my severe brain injury over twenty years ago whereby I:

- Was in a coma for four weeks
- Was in hospital for six months
- Had to learn to walk, talk, eat solid food all over again
- As well getting my brain back together from a very scrambled state since December 1995.

See the diagram below on the progression of identity and of the importance of identity to us all.

The Progression of Identity

Identity is a fundamental question for all of us as identity for many people in our culture is linked and dependent on what other people think about us and our achievements in life i.e. is performance based. When your ability to perform is taken from you by through loss of an important relationship, injury or age, disruption of your life is a major consequence.
To have an identity not based on performance is vital for a continuing life.

Photographic Sequence of where the author has come from:

Ken in a comatose state December 1995

I had a severe brain injury after coming off a boogie – board in a metre of water on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia. The final consequential result was Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). I was eventually transferred to a ward called M7 at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane. I was in coma for four weeks.



One day two of my friends my friends, Colin & Julianne had come to see me with their little baby. Even though I was in a coma, I heard them talking. When you are in coma you can hear people but cannot respond. Colin said to his wife 'Ken will not be doing this in hurry'. Colin put the baby in my arms and I felt it lying there. The above photograph is of that occasion.

Ken Home from Six Months in Hospital June 1996

Ken with his wife Harriet at their house at Chambers Flat



In 1981, we built a unique natural house out of recycled timber for a fraction of the price of a new house. People often come out to see this house. I had run an environmental landscape design and construction business for twenty years so I had the skills to put things together like this. This is on our five acres of light open eucalypt bush at Chambers Flat, Brisbane.

The house is largely of glass set into a post and lintel construction of 100-year old broadaxed timbers and sandstone walls. The total concept of indoor-outdoor flow, has a nice ambience to it and the design is unique and lends itself well to future development. See the house and garden on my new personal experiences website:

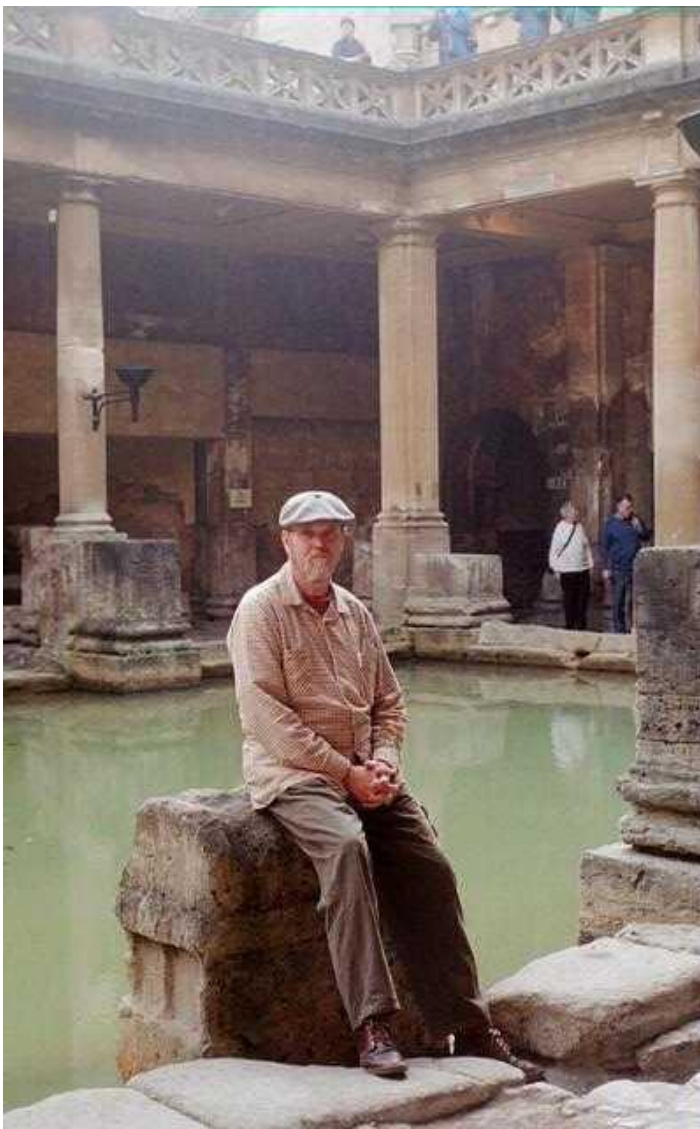
- **OUR HOUSE [An Overview](#)**
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The house is called 'Ken & Harriet House' ... it is a great place to live as Harriet and I largely look after the large garden and acreage. We have a real sense of close community, starting with the family and spreading to many others. I still do not drive twenty years out from my accident but I have learnt to drive on the Internet to go around the world in few minutes and see hundreds of people at the same time. It is the main centre for 'New Earth Community': <http://www.newearthcommunity.org/> an international Cyberspace Christian Community.

Ken: Home seven years later Talking with friends November 2002



A photograph from March 2003 at the ancient Roman town of Bath in England..... when Harriet, my wife and I went on a four week holiday. See website www.romanbaths.co.uk we had an amazing time for a whole day in



the ancient city of Bath. The bathes are from the first and second Century from Imperial Rome.

See the website posts on this trip to England in 2003:

- [England, Devon generally Week 1 Of Our England Holiday in 2003](#)
- [Stourhead Garden Week 2 Of Our England Holiday in 2003](#)
- [City Of London 2003 4th week of our England Holiday](#)

March 2005: Ken Nearly Ten years after the accident

The photo below is one of Harriet and I from our one day visit to Pompeii in our four week holiday to Italy in mid March and April that year.



Ken had excellent support from his wife and many, many friends throughout my hospitalisation. Every day for six months, Harriet drove from Chambers Flat where we live, to Woolloongabba at the PAH Which is about thirty kilometres. To find a park outside the hospital and walking in made a journey of at least an hour. After the visit she had the long journey home again. This generous support which I received, was a very important part of my recovery. Many other patients are not so fortunate. This support of patients, is vital in

the whole of life. You rarely get much done by just yourself in life. The ability to be able to work in relation with others is a great benefit in life. Healing is not just an independent thing but is a relationship thing. I further say this in another way by saying that human beings are relational, not mechanical.

Transformation of Life Direction:

This side of the accident since I was hospitalized from 8th December 1996 to now, I have really discovered people in a big way. I have really come to value people, no matter who they are, what they do or say. I have developed a passion to build inner community with many people around the world especially by e-mail and a website on the Internet. As I am on a permanently paid holiday through my life-long Income Protection Policy, I have time to spend with people in a way I never could do in my busy business.

As a result of my restoration from brain injury via the sustainable mode of living, I have a desire to bring the sustainable life to many people. It applies to everyone, not just brain injury survivors. You can live a life of apparent wholeness on the outside but be quite disabled on the inside. I have developed a sustainable life model to bring to people.

Life to me is like glass of water. If you sit the glass of water on a shelf for a week or month, it will go stagnant and it will do no good for anyone else including yourself. If you give it away to a thirsty person, you will be able to fill the glass again and give more away. This is tapping into the spiritual source of life it is an endless stream of living water from a universal supply.

If life is like a glass of water, you need both a glass to drink with and you need water to sustain your inner man. If you have only a broken cup (the external framework for dipping life out with), you will go thirsty if you drink dirty or polluted water you will get sick If all you have is a look-a-like water like methylated spirits, you run the risk of dying ... be careful of what you drink along your life journey.

See Part 2: The Sustainable Life ... for a life of wholeness ... Our Nature of Being