

LifeQuest

MyQuest

BY Daniel Labbe

LifeQuest

Finally, the Prospectus for LifeQuest is ready! To be fair, it isn't a true Prospectus. First of all, I have no idea what a true Prospectus looks like. Second, this is my first attempt at creating a Prospectus. There are typo's, and I ~~now~~ realize that it would be more beneficial to write ~~a~~ seperate Prospectuses for different demographics: one for investors, one for core members, and one for professionals that I hope to attract.

With that said, please give the following "Prospectus" your full attention. LifeQuest is my dream. So far I'm completely ~~alone~~ on my own and I have extremely limited resources, but I won't allow that to stop me. There was a time when I was desperate to improve my life. I spent years trying to overcome the issues I was dealing with. I tried AA, NA, rehabs, counseling, spirituality, and day programs. I gave these efforts everything I had - over and over again. I continued to go through cycles of success and failure until I ended up making some of the worst decisions of my life. Those decisions ended up causing a lot of people tremendous pain. How could this happen when I was trying my best? I am creating LifeQuest so that anyone willing to try his or her best will have access to an effective program. ~~The~~ ~~a~~ cost of not having a program like LifeQuest is far too steep. So please, give this ~~prospectus~~ Prospectus a chance. "Like I said

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I'm on my own so far, but something as big and important as my dream for LifeQuest requires a community effort. I'm not going to let my lack of education (got my GED when I was 16) or my challenging history hold me back from making LifeQuest a reality. I am confident that after reading the following outline you will see that not only am I serious about this project, I am the one best suited to make it a reality.

Thank you for your patience and enjoy! I look forward to hearing from you.

A Prospectus for

LifeQuest

By Daniel Labbe

LifeQuest is my dream for a revolutionary self-help social organization. LifeQuest will offer people the social support, practical skills, and encouraging guidance needed to meet their personal development goals in a friendly and rewarding environment.

LifeQuest is for anyone with a desire to:

- * Lead a more rewarding life.
- * Overcome personal obstacles such as: addictions, unfulfilling lifestyles, depression, loneliness, boredom, or any number of difficult issues.
- * Meet new people, create meaningful and rewarding relationships, or join a positive community.
- * Contribute their gifts to the local community.
- * Sharpen their leadership skills, life skills, or social skills.
- * Challenge themselves to achieve their personal potential.
- * Gain a sense of inner freedom and personal empowerment.

What makes LifeQuest different from the hundreds of other self-help support groups? The sad truth is that the options currently available to people seeking to improve their lives are either ineffective or outrageously expensive; yet because demand is so high traditional options still flourish. Here's a look at the choices people have when they wish to improve their personal lives:

- * Twelve-step programs.
- * Expensive retreats or seminars.
- * Pricey life-coaches.
- * Psychological counseling.
- * Medication.
- * Self-help books.
- * Religion.

To be fair, the above list is comprised of a powerful set of options. Each of these choices has its own unique value. The problem for most people is that they don't have the time or financial means to make use of all these options, and there isn't one choice on that list that has proven itself to be reliably effective on

its own. But what if there was an organization that made use of the most effective aspects of each of these options, incorporating them into a comprehensive and cohesive program? And what if this organization was able to make use of the social networking capabilities and any-time-accessibility of the internet? And finally, what if this organization could make a significant and positive impact in each community that hosted a chapter? Sound impossible? The fact is that this is exactly what LifeQuest is all about, and making it happen is not as difficult as it sounds.

Take a moment to review the following break-down containing the main features of LifeQuest:

Online aspects of LifeQuest include -

- * Social networking capabilities similiar to Facebook.
- * Chatrooms and message boards.
- * LifeQuest local events and meetings calander.
- * A community out-reach page (includes local volunteer opportunities and a "time bank").
- * The LifeQuest course curriculum teaching the latest skills and principles available in personal development, addiction recovery, and psychology. Spiritual considerations will be included in each lesson, but these are not essential to the program. Instead, spiritual considerations will conclude each lesson as thoughtful considerations for each member to contemplate on his own. -Note: I will use the masculine personal pronoun because I am male, and choosing one makes for easier writing and reading.

Real-world social aspects of LifeQuest include -

- * Weekly support groups or "compass points".
- * Fun weekly events and outings or "excursions".
- * Bi-monthly "boosters" (promotional and fundraising events).
- * Volunteer opportunities within the local community.
- * Quarterly LifeQuest worksops and retreats.
- * Graduations. Each part of the tree-part course concludes with a graduation ceremony.

So what does it all mean? As you can see, LifeQuest is unique in that it offers a variety of ways for members to meet, support

each other, and learn new, effective skills. I have years of experience in trying each of the traditional options I noted earlier, and one thing I can tell you is that none of them offer a fully rounded approach to personal development. As noted earlier, each of the traditional options has its own unique strengths, yet each of them fail in their own unique way as well. LifeQuest will retain the strengths of these programs without including their weaknesses.

Let's take a look at an example.

Strengths of the twelve-step model include -

1. Twelve-step groups are affordable for everyone because there are no membership fees.
2. Twelve-step groups are easily accessible. No matter where a person lives there is sure to be a support group within a reasonable distance.
3. Twelve-step groups provide members a way to support each other in a social setting. Members are able to share their experiences, socialize, and support each other in an accepting and welcoming environment.

Ways LifeQuest will retain these strengths include -

1. My goal for LifeQuest is to have a chapter in every major city in the United States within five years. To take the concept of any-time-accessibility a step further LifeQuest will make use of the internet. Chat-rooms will provide members a way to reach out to each other at any time. A LifeQuest volunteer who has graduated all three courses will be available online 24-hours a day. If a local volunteer isn't available members will have access to the Home-site which will always have a volunteer ready to offer support, guidance, and inspiration. This eliminates the problem of feeling awkward about calling your "sponsor" at odd hours of the night. LifeQuest recognizes the importance of providing new-comers with one-on-one support, and this is the reason LifeQuest will include "guides" to help people on their personal journey's.
2. Membership to LifeQuest will be free. Members will have free access to all the online services including the LifeQuest curric-

ulum. LifeQuest will support itself through the fees charged for workshops, retreats, excursions, drives, and contributions. The goal of LifeQuest is to make the most effective tools in personal development available to anyone with a sincere desire to improve his life, and to do that in a friendly, supportive environment.

3. Weekly compass point meetings and excursions will provide members with a structured social setting to learn and support each other in as well as provide members with a chance to have fun. The compass point meetings will give members a place to share their experiences and learn from each other. These meetings will resemble traditional support groups, yet the focus will be on how the members are putting the skills they are learning to work in their own lives. There will be time for "open speaking" where anyone can share, time for an educational presentation, and time for veterans to give motivational speeches.

The excursions will give members ^{a chance} to socialize and put their skills to work in a safe, fun setting. Personal development and recovery (of any kind) can be lonely and often difficult work. these excursions will provide members with a way to add fun, joy, and relaxation to their lives - something most traditional groups fail to offer.

Where traditional support groups fail -

1. As mentioned above, most support groups do not offer their members a way to enjoy life with each other. Instead they offer week after week of meetings that take place in an oppressive setting. Recovery and personal development are serious undertakings, but when seriousness and structure become the only options it can become overwhelming and depressing. No wonder why most new-comers lose steam after a few short weeks!
2. Traditional support groups do not offer specific skills and strategies to meet the obstacles that naturally arise on the path of personal development. Instead what is offered is a set of vague principles, many of which make their members feel powerless. These groups fail to make use of the recent discoveries found in psychology, personal development, and recovery. These findings have created a plethora of new, effective skills, yet traditional groups still rely on principles created around the turn of the century -

principles that have proven to have poor success rates.

Ways LifeQuest will overcome these issues include -

1. As noted earlier, LifeQuest will offer excursions as well as boosters to give its members a way to add fun, joy, and fulfillment to their lives. These events will also give members a chance to create rewarding relationships with people who share similar goals. This can make a world of difference to those struggling with difficult issues.
2. LifeQuest will offer a three part course online. This course will teach specific skills aimed at overcoming the obstacles people most often face on this path. These skills will have practical applications in the members daily life. Later I will go over the skills and principles involved in the LifeQuest curriculum. It is key that members have practical tools to meet the challenges they are sure to face. It is not enough to fill them with affirmations, pithy slogans, and vague principles.

My plan is to have the curriculum I am creating using my experience and extensive research in the fields of psychology, recovery, and personal and spiritual development reviewed by other professionals. I would like to collaborate with professionals in the fields of psychology, recovery, and personal development as well as anyone who has created effective programs along these lines to create the most effective and rewarding program possible.

Sadly, it is often the case that the latest and most effective information is only available in programs that are outrageously expensive, or through extensive research. There is not one program that offers what LifeQuest offers in an affordable fashion. Instead people spend thousands to go on weekend retreats at spa-like locations while the average person is stuck with the same old routine offered in traditional programs. It is time to make a change. It is time to give people easy, affordable access to this information, and to do it in a way that is effective, fun, and meaningful. It's time for a self-help revolution like LifeQuest! As a society we can't afford not to create LifeQuest.

In the following pages you will find information concerning

the core principles guiding the curriculum for LifeQuest's online course and specific details concerning the main features of LifeQuest.

Guiding principles and skills for the creation of LifeQuest's on-line curriculum. (This is not the actual curriculum, but the main features, principles, and skills involved.)

A key idea behind the LifeQuest philosophy is that life is a Quest. This Quest is very personal and unique to each person. Often-times we find ourselves sidetracked from this Quest and it is here where we find ourselves in trouble. For many, the issues they are absorbed in while sidetracked become the main focus of their lives. LifeQuest is a way for people to reclaim their Quests and to equip themselves with the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their Quests in an effective, rewarding way.

In addition to the skills and principles you will find here, LifeQuest will also offer spiritual considerations for members who are spiritually inclined. For those not so inclined, they need not feel that they are missing something as the curriculum itself is not based on these considerations. It is perfectly effective on its own, making use of skills anyone can grasp and apply to their lives.

While taking the course members will be asked to keep a journal of their Quest. The curriculum will involve exercises that make use of the journaling process - something I, along with millions of other people, have found extremely useful in the growth process.

The online course will consist of three parts: The Explorer's Path; The Sojourner's Path; and The Hero's Path. The road to self-actualization follows a general path with predictable obstacles and milestones even when the specific details of each person's journey differ. (See the work of Joseph Campbell for more on this general path to self-actualization.)

The Explorer's Path is designed to help people take those first difficult steps in their journey toward inner freedom and personal empowerment. On this path members will take responsibility for their experience of life, the obstacles they face, and the attainment of their goals. They will learn the importance of forgiveness and compassion, and initiate a deep healing process. Then

members will be guided through a series of self-exploration exercises designed to increase their knowledge of themselves - their goals, their obstacles, and their amazing potential. The Explorer's Path concludes with a decision that each member must decide for himself: they must decide if they are willing to make a true commitment to overcome the obstacles they will surely face and obtain their personal and spiritual goals.

Now let's take a closer look at each aspect of this path.

Personal Responsibility - Many of us who have led dysfunctional lives or who are working on personal development are often prone to blaming all our problems or the quality of our life experience on people and circumstances outside of our control. This plays a key role in creating a sense of powerlessness and negativity in many people's lives. To create positive change we must stop blaming forces outside of our control for our issues, even when the blame is valid. Whenever we blame we also surrender our power to make conscious change. This is why it is vital that we take responsibility for every aspect of our lives. This bold, counter-intuitive step will empower us and put us in the best position to create the change we desire. The feeling of self-empowerment that results from taking this step is exhilarating. Now we are no longer victim's of life, but co-creators of our own destinies.

One way I have found to be helpful in taking this often scary step was to first take responsibility for my freedom to choose. This is a specific step that will have practical results for anyone who takes it, and it is easy to understand. First we consider the premise that each of us has the capacity to choose how he responds to any given situation. We each have the choice to respond to any situation in a way that reflects the best of who we are, that reflects our goals and values. Once the idea that this freedom is available to all of us is accepted we can then choose to take responsibility for this freedom. This puts personal responsibility into a practical and easy to understand concept, and by agreeing that we do in fact have the ability to respond in this fashion, we unwittingly take responsibility for our own lives. It is through these choices that we create the quality of our lives.

Forgiveness - Forgiveness is an act of healing first, and an act of mercy second. To increase the quality of our lives and to be able to work on personal development a certain amount of healing needs to take place first. This is especially true for people who have led traumatic or dysfunctional lives, but it is also true for anyone who has yet to engage this process. The nature of life gives us no other choice if we sincerely hope to make positive change.

Many of us consider resentments, grudges, and a critical view of ourselves and others a normal part of life, but these qualities have a significant negative impact on our lives. Just consider how often we are caught up in thoughts of anger, resentment, blame, disgust, ill-will, contempt, or shame. Such thoughts often consume our attention wrapping us in a cloak of negativity and suffering. For anyone hoping to lead a purpose-driven life such distractions are extremely detrimental. Over time such a pattern would turn anyone into a bitter and angry failure. Such people are constantly whining about how life cheated them and how awful people are.

The process of forgiveness and healing starts by first forgiving ourselves. This is possible because we have already taken the step of owning full responsibility for our lives and being committed to a course of change. Once we have found the compassion and understanding to forgive ourselves we are then able to extend that forgiveness to other people.

True forgiveness does not mean that we don't hold people responsible for their actions, but that we forgive the moral trespass and choose not to hold ill-will toward that person. We still hold that person accountable, but we no longer need to hold resentments. This kind of forgiveness does more for the forgiver than it does for the one being forgiven. "Holding a grudge is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die."

Self-Exploration - "Before we attempt any major changes in our lives it is good to learn more about who we are on a deeper level. It may seem like we should already know who we are, but this is not often the case. It takes a conscious effort to become deeply familiar with ourselves. On The Explorer's Path we focus on learning about our goals, values, and dreams; our strengths, weaknesses, and talents; what makes us sad, happy, and angry;

what motivates us, inspires us, and moves us? A thorough examination of who we are is a necessity for anyone who wishes to take an active role in living out his personal Quest.

It is my belief that within every person there exists a core of amazing beauty and extraordinary potential, a spring of natural power just waiting to be discovered. When we take the time to explore who we are on a deeper level we will inevitably be amazed by the core of strength, talent, and love that we find there. Once we discover this treasure a whole new world of possibilities opens up to us.

What keeps many of us from discovering these treasures in our daily lives is our tendency to be absorbed by what I like to call The Great Distraction. So many of us are lost in the business of daily living and ego-concerns: seeking approval, amassing luxury materials, paying bills for things we don't need, chasing desires, averting fears, creating "status", judging and complaining, and numbing ourselves with food, drugs, alcohol/drugs, and sex. These are the norms for many of us, and we become so absorbed - distracted - by all this that we miss the chance to truly live our lives with any sense of freedom, personal empowerment, and purpose. On The Explorer's Path members will explore their values, priorities, and dreams to make sure they don't waste their potential by being absorbed in the Great Distraction.

A fantastic exercise to facilitate self-exploration is the self-profiling exercise. In this exercise the participant is asked to make believe that he has for some reason been afflicted with a severe case of amnesia. It is now his job to play the part of investigative profiler in order to figure out who he is. This is a great way for people to get an outsider's view of themselves. In this exercise the participant looks at his life like a profiler would. He looks into his personal belongings such as books, music collection, clothing, journals, appointment books, photo albums, place of residence, and so on. He also looks at the facts of his history (leaving out all the stories that go with them because he can't remember stories!) things like family history, work history, schooling, and so on. After a thorough investigation of the facts is gathered he then tries to make sense of it all. Who is this guy?

What do I like about him? What do I dislike? Would I hang-out with this guy?

This and many other exercises make self-exploration an enlightening and exciting experience.

Self-Worth - Building a strong sense of self-worth is vital for anyone who hopes to lead an empowered and rewarding life. After completing the self-exploration portion of the course members can take advantage of the resulting boost to their self-worth by riding that momentum and create a sense of self that is empowering and full of limitless potential.

A major stumbling block for so many of us is that we just don't believe in our own intrinsic worth and we are ignorant of the amazing potential we possess.

One effective way to begin this journey to a healthy sense of self is to review the beliefs we hold about ourselves and the world we live in. In this portion of the course members will identify beliefs that are ineffective, disempowering, and/or harmful and replace them with new beliefs that empower them and give them a rewarding sense of themselves and the world they live in. We start this process by identifying areas of our lives that we find difficult, stressful, or disempowering. We then examine the beliefs we hold concerning these areas of our lives. For example: I once felt that people and relationships were extremely stressful. I found that one of my beliefs in this area was that people are too difficult to deal with and in the end they will always disappoint you. I had plenty of memories, or references, that backed up this belief as well. I then thought of a new belief that would be helpful and rewarding. My new belief was this: when I treat people with respect, warmth, and generosity they generally respond with kindness. I then went through my memories and found references that backed up this belief. The strange thing was that I was able to find an abundance of collaborating references. So why did I choose to believe the disempowering ones? Anyway, I then spent 30 days imprinting this and other empowering beliefs into my mind by going over how much stress the other beliefs caused me and how much joy and empowerment the new beliefs would give me. I was able

to do this only because I went back and found solid references to back up the new beliefs - and it worked!

In addition to changing beliefs members will take part in many other self-worth building exercises such as: creating empowering affirmations and learning mindfulness skills. Each member will also have a "guide" (similar to a sponsor) to help him navigate this exciting and challenging journey. The curriculum is meant to be interactive and supportive as well as educational.

The Explorer's Path will conclude with a reminder of the main points and skills and a practical guide to putting these skills to work in the real world. An emphasis will be placed on the member's ability to use his freedom to choose. This concept is key for anyone who wishes to reclaim his life and be successful with his goals.

At this point members will be asked to thoroughly consider if they would like to continue on their path of self-actualization. If so they are asked to write out a personal commitment that includes some of their goals and new-found values. This step is to be taken very seriously. This commitment is the members way of truly dedicating himself to his personal path of self-actualization. At this point members can choose to take part in graduation ceremony.

This ceremony is much more than a graduation though. Members can use this opportunity to initiate themselves into their chosen paths. The ceremony will make use of symbolism and community initiation rituals. The practice of initiation has profound effects on a person's psyche and can give people a true sense of entering a new phase of life. The ceremony would start with each initiate entering the room wearing an old, worn-out shawl (cloak or some other symbolic piece of clothing) and then he will approach a small stand that holds a bowl with fire rising out of its center. The initiate then places a sealed piece of paper into the fire. This paper contains all the initiates old behaviors, views, and beliefs that he wishes to leave behind. The initiate then proceeds toward the front of the room. Along the way a LifeQuest member approaches him and removes the old shawl saying something like "May the old man (woman) be laid to rest". Then the initiate proceeds and another member approaches and places a new, elegant shawl on the

initiate saying something like, " May the new man (woman) prosper". The initiate then proceeds to the front of the room and faces the audience. At this point the initiate reads his committmrnt so the whole LifeQuest community can hear. At this point the master of ceremonies comes and hands the initiate a certificate and some sort of token. Everyone cheers as the new member comes down and is welcomed among his brothers and sisters.

This may sound religious or strange to some of you, but it is not. This ceremony is designed to truly imprint the idea of lettig go of old ways and stepping onto a new path. This is a ceremonial way for the member to officially embark on his personal Quest. Think of the difference between living with someone and just saying your married and actually going through the marriage ceremony. It has a profound effect on the psyche. Ritual and symbolism are extremely powerful and useful. This has nothing to do with religion. Each member can choose to take part in this amazing process or not. It is not required, but is offered as a way for members to truly officiate thei personal Quests and join the LifeQuest community as a new person, completely accepted no matter what his past is because that past was consumed in the ceremonial flame (or the parts of it that the member wishes to let go of).

Please see the work of Joseph Campbell for more on symbolism, ritual, and initiation.

Members will be asked to work with the skills they learned on The Explorer's Path for at least 60 days (preferably 90) before moving on to The Sojourner's Path. True, meaningful change needs to be given the time and respect it deserves to set its roots depply into our lives.

The Sojourner's Path - This path is designed to give members the practical skills, knowledge, and support they need to achieve their unique personal development goals. While on this path members will benefit from the latest findings in the fields of psychology, recovery, personal development, and life-enjoyment. Members will become proficient with a variety of tools they can use to create the lives of personal empowerment and inner freedom they deserve. Some of these skills include:

* CBT and DBT skills (Cognitive and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy)

- * A deeper exploration of our freedom to choose
- * The creative use of recasting
- * Daily ESV (Emotional States of Value) achievement
- * Grounding skills
- * The transformational power of Empowering Questions
- * "Questing" skills
- * The power of mindfulness and meditation
- * Incorporating Daily Victories
- * The positive effects of compassion
- * Distress tolerance skills
- * The principles of joy and happiness
- * Making amends
- * Interpersonal skills
- * The power of dream creation
- * The power of listening

These are just some of the skills members will benefit from while they are on The Sojourner's Path. Once equipped with these skills members will be able to navigate their unique Quests with competence and confidence.

The focus on this path is directed toward gaining the necessary skills needed for members to meet their goals. These skills are practical and easy to learn. Members will be able to test the effectiveness of these skills for themselves and should expect to see immediate, measureable results (unlike so many of the vague principles taught in traditional programs).

On the path of healing and self-actualization people come across many predictable obstacles. The skills here are designed to help members overcome these obstacles with confidence and effectiveness. Some of these obstacles include: stress tolerance, irrational thoughts, negative thought patterns, emotional instability, apathy, lack of direction, interpersonal effectiveness, and a general lack of skills. Because LifeQuest is about increasing the quality of its members lives we also include weekly excursions and volunteer opportunities so members can put their skills to the test in fun, enjoyable, and rewarding environments.

It is my experience that after the initial healing period a

person needs to learn practical skills to meet the upcoming challenges; otherwise, he is likely to become discouraged and return to old patterns of living. This is the average result for people who choose to use traditional support group methods, and it is my goal to give people more effective and rewarding options and to do it in a way that is deeply meaningful and transformational.

I suggest that members spend at least 120 days on The Sojourner's Path before moving on to The Hero's Path. Members will need to be proficient in the use of the skills learned here in order to meet the challenges of The Hero's Path. It is here on The Hero's Path where the Quest truly begins.

The Hero's Path - This is where the deeper work of self-actualization and Questing begins. On this path members will re-evaluate their goals as these often change by the time one reaches this point. Members will also create a mission statement and a Destiny by Design Road Map. With these final steps created members will be ready to venture forth on their Quest. Here they will discover the true depth of their potential as they take on leadership roles within the LifeQuest community. Through self-expression, leadership, and creativity members will find meaning and purpose as well as a sense of fulfillment previously unknown to them. It is here where they will discover the deepest lessons of life as they live out their personal Quests. The skills and principles taught here are merely a way to help facilitate this deeply personal process.

Some of the skills and principles learned on The Hero's Path include:

- * The freedom and empowerment found in "shadow work"
- * Adding depth and meaning to life through service and contribution
- * An overview of Joseph Campbell's teachings on myths and the role of the Hero on his Quest and ways to make these teachings meaningful in our lives
- * Principles of transcending ego (or the "little self")
- * Psychological and spiritual teachings on the nature of self
- * Leadership training and claiming our roles with confidence
- * Learning how to listen to our deeper intelligences (trusting

one's self)

Some of the leadership roles available to members on this path will include:

- * Being a "Guide" (similiar to a sponsor) for members
- * Volunteering as a chat room monitor for the local chapter's web-site
- * Leading one of the weekly compass point meetings
- * Giving a speech or presentation at a compass point meeting
- * Leading a workshop
- * Being a facilitator for one of the weekly excursions
- * Becoming a LifeQuest board member
- * Contribute to the LifeQuest online newsletter
- * Coordinating and leading one of the bi-monthly boosters
- * Organize volunteer missions within the local community

At some point on The Hero's Path there will be a "return of the hero" ceremony to initiate the member into his new role as the returned hero, a person who has aquired the boon of his Quest and is now returning as a new being, one who can share his amazing discoveries and experiences with the community.

It is my belief that the outline provided here is revolutionary in nature. Each aspect has a proven record of success in its own field, and the unique combination of all the aspects outlined here is something extraordinary.

There are millions of people (if not all of us) who wish to lead a more rewarding and successful life; afterall, isn't this what life's all about? So many of us feel unfulfilled, disempowered, lonely, confused, and empty; so many of us struggle with dysfunctional or unfulfilling lives, addiction, mental illness, or poor life-skills; and so many of us long to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, something meaningful and impactful. Well, LifeQuest is my answer to all of these issues. LifeQuest is what I was so desperately seeking so many years ago when my life was such an unspeakable mess.

Because what LifeQuest teaches is logical and practical people don't have to worry about swallowing a bunch of alien ideas. Everything taught in LifeQuest can be put to the test by each member
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and the results will speak for themselves. I know this because I come from a background that most people believe would be impossible to change. I was a drug and alcohol addict, I was diagnosed with bipolar at age 15, I have a terrible criminal record and was sentenced to 12 - 14 years in prison. I've been to many psychiatric hospitals, grew up in an extremely dysfunctional home, and led an anti-social life for years. A person with such a background is considered hopeless and useless in our society, but the fact is I have turned my life around. Today I lead a life of inner freedom and personal empowerment; I am happy, healthy, and responsible. I am looked up to as a role model. I am the creator and facilitator of the Mindful Living group - a successful prison program that teaches inmates the skills they need to lead more rewarding and responsible lives. I wake up every day amazed by the blessings of my life. I am the author of an inspirational and popular blog called MyQuest (betweenthebars.org/blogs/342/). So how did I go from one extreme to the other? It wasn't easy, in fact the process nearly killed me - literally. With the help of some great therapists and through my own determination to overcome my issues I was able to face my demons and overcome them. In the process I studied psychology, explored many spiritual paths, read countless books on personal development, and I put to use everything I learned. I found what worked and what didn't, and I stuck with those things that worked the best. Nearly everything that I have found to be transformational were things that were lacking from the traditional support group models commonly available to people. Remember, I truly gave my all to overcoming my issues before my incarceration. Rehabs, AA, NA, conseling, spirituality - all of it, but I was unable to make it work. What turned out to be the most transformational for me were the simple principles of my freedom to choose, personal responsibility, mindfulness, and stress tolerance, DBT and CBT were also extremely helpful therapies.

It is true that anyone is capable of learning everything I have outlined here on their own, but let me tell you the process is grueling when done by trial and error, and it is a hard road to go alone. My dream is to bring everything I've found transformational into a single program and to do it in a fun, supportive way. I

want people to be able to come together in a community of support and brotherhood and sisterhood. I want this program to not only be transformational for the individuals involved but also for the communities that host LifeQuest chapters. I want to approach personal development in a holistic fashion, and I want to do it in a way that makes it available to everyone regardless of their economic or spiritual background. It's time for a better way to bring people together, it's time for LifeQuest.

Ways LifeQuest will support itself include -

- * LifeQuest workshops and weekly excursions will cost members a small fee
- * Boosters and weekly compass point meetings will collect donations
- * We can sell LifeQuest t-shirts and hats
- * Bi-annual drives will solicit donations from members and the local community

As anyone who is part of a popular organization can attest, the ways to generate revenue are nearly endless, and because Life Quest is a non-profit organization we aren't looking to revenue as an indicator of success.

There is so much more to LifeQuest than what I've outlined here, things like LifeQuest culture, the LifeQuest time-bank, the nature of the community out-reach program, the LifeQuest scholarship fund, and the spiritual considerations. My goal for now is to generate interest in my dream. Does LifeQuest spark your interest? Are you a professional in any field relevant to LifeQuest? Would you like to become a core member of LifeQuest when it opens its first chapter in the Boston area? Do you have any helpful suggestions to make LifeQuest the best possible program it could be? Are you someone interested in community programs to invest in? Do you have experience with getting federal, state, or local grants? If any of these apply to you I would love to hear from you. Please write to me or leave a comment on my blog (betweenthebars.org/blogs/342/).

I plan on being released from prison in 2015. By then I hope to have all the details of LifeQuest worked out. The full cur-

riculum, funding, a group of core members ready to lead LifeQuest into reality, professionals in the fields of psychology, personal development, spiritual development, and program creation who have contributed to the creation of the LifeQuest curriculum, a web page prepared to provide the LifeQuest online services, and so much more! So as you can see I'll be needing some help. This is going to be a self-help revolution, so don't miss your chance to be a part of LifeQuest. It isn't enough to simply like the idea of LifeQuest, if what I've outlined here interests you in any way, or if you have struggled with the traditional ways to improve your life, or if you think you could contribute in any way, then I NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU! The only way I can get LifeQuest to work is with your help. You don't have to be a professional or financially blessed to help, as long as LifeQuest has sparked an interest in you than you are the one I need to hear from.

Thanks a lot for reading this and putting up with the typo's. Take care of yourselves and HAPPY QUESTING!

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Bare Essentials Needed to make LifeQuest a Reality

1. The LifeQuest web-site. A site featuring a monthly newsletter, events calander, community out-reach page and more will be needed. Estimated cost - up to \$5,000.
2. A meeting place. The meetings and workshops would take place in similiar environments as AA and other twelve-step groups - church rooms, class rooms, etc. I would like to have a full years rent paid in advance. Estimated cost - up to \$3,000.
3. Printed literature and materials. Tracts that state the purpose and main principles of LifeQuest, slogans, and affirmation posters for the meetings as well as accounting materials, workshop materials, facilitator training guides, and promotional materials. Estimated cost - \$2,500
4. Legal. Because the excursions will often involve activities I would like waivers created and to consult a lawyer on the many issues involved. Estimated cost \$2,000
5. A core group of members. It is essential that LifeQuest has a core group of members who are excited about LifeQuest and have had success in attaining their own personal development goals.
6. Promotion. My goal is to have LifeQuest made easily accessible to anyone who can benefit from our services. This will require some promotion. Estimated cost - \$3,500

I hope to gain access to some state and federal grants, but I am also hoping to solicit the help of philanthropic foundations as well as interested buisnesses and private citizens. I know this will be a tough road, but this is my dream and I will not settle for anything less than success. There are millions of people in great need of what LifeQuest has to offer, so if you can help in any way, even if it's just telling a ~~friend~~^{Friend} who you think would like to help or offering me some advice (I sure could use some!) I would appreciate your support. Thank you.