

Livinglifeasart – without limits?

Werner May

Remember: “Life is made of pieces. All of it. Something is always missing! And: The pieces will remain pieces. No matter how hard we try, something will always be missing, even if less is missing.”

The same applies to *livinglifeasart*. It as well can only blossom, will remain piecemeal.

This should not be disappointing but rather relaxing. It especially shows respect for one's own limits. Nobody is able to do everything. For nobody everything is possible. Of course, limits can be seen as suffocating and as prohibiting but limits accepted in confidence give orientation, support and safety.

Which limits are we talking about?

- **Designer**

All twelve keys for living life as art are characterized by being proactive, “activity which is for something”, as they believe in the values of the goal.

They are human possibilities to design.

You need to understand that you are neither a victim or a blindly acting being nor someone seeking after his or her own advantage. Becoming a designer with God and other people means: Knowing your own contribution, being encouraged to make it and letting others complete you.

It is not coincidence or other people that decide all the time but you are also “head not only tail”, you are involved. Nevertheless, things do not always need to go the way you want them to.

The twelve keys are a way to practice becoming a designing “artist”, in what most of us are only apprentices.

If we want to it is easy to get sick, it is easy to become unhappy, it is easy to destroy relationships.

The opposite – to get and to stay healthy, to live and maintain fulfilling relationships – is not that easily reached. There is no recipe for it. In reverse there is. Unfortunately I appreciate that in recent years it has been put more effort in analyzing successful processes in order to learn from them.

What characterizes happiness, what makes an enriching marriage, which factors distinguish healthy people?

However, the realization of this gained knowledge can merely prepare success but not “force” it in the same way as destroying is in our hands.

Being a designer does not correspond to behaving like the doer, the winner, the alpha leader. A designer makes his contribution with all his heart, all his strength but then leaves it to God.

Eventually, success is a gift. Grace.

- **Avoidance key**

Additionally applies: The destructive is there. Who does not manage to control it, who does not know how to minimize risk factors will hardly find the strength and the time to live life as art.

The avoidance keys contained in the twelve keys of *livinglifeasart* characterize the capacities to meet risk factors.

1. Dealing with problems ranks first: If the problems increase, **livinglifeasart** risks to die.
2. Not letting crises and conflicts and 3. other challenges lead to negative stress are further avoidance keys as well as 4. organizing your life by making plans and creating space for *livinglifeasart*.

These and the other eight development keys shall become good habits, “paved ways of the heart” (Ps 84, 6) and thereby open doors for the Holy Ghost, to open up beauty as the reflection of God’s glory.

- **“Human homework”**

However, the freedom to design by avoidance and development keys requires that we did our three “human homework” assignments, homework life sets everybody – another limit.

The safety question: Can I deal with life’s anxieties and problems in a calming way?

The relationship question: Where is my place? Who belongs to me? Can I shape relationships in a conciliating way?

The achievement question: What can I give and achieve? What is my contribution to life?

If one or several of these three big development questions dominate our life as they have not yet been (fairly) answered, there will hardly be space for *livinglifeasart*.

This homework assignments need to be “done” while growing up. And they run the risk of being set again and again by personal circumstances.

- **“False gods”**

If God is not the centre of our life, something else (an idea, a possession) or somebody else will take his place. Something else will be absolutized as highest value and influence our perception. Another splendour, meaning and value is attributed to beauty. Beauty will lead us somewhere else than honouring God. And as time goes by, the necessary light might be missing which beauty needs!

- **Survival situation**

To escape with your “bare life” from a natural disaster, a tornado, a forest fire, a flood – in these situations, the avoidance keys are not the answer. Terror, civil war, famine, epidemics call for the art of surviving and organised help and pacification.

When such situations became chronic, what they should not, one might be able to lift the gaze, light the small flowers of beauty, of hope, of memory and regain persistence and resistance.

All these limits of *livinglifeasart* – limited designing and avoidance capacity, exhausting “human homework” and false gods in our hearts – limit or kill *livinglifeasart*. However, this also clearly shows when *livinglifeasart* succeeds and makes us appreciate it as a gift. Living life as art is not a therapy.

Living life as art is not a way to salvation.

Living life as art does not serve for human perfection.

Living life as art makes the imperfect blossom.

Living life as art provides a bunch of positions aiming for beauty. Based on truth and the good, *livinglifeasart* wants to lead to knowledge of God.

Livinglifeasart is worship.