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## LIFE'S NATURAL ORDER

At each of the dozens of workshops I've presented to GCSAA members during the past 10 years, I've asked attendees to prioritize the following five elements that drive life's course (in alphabetical order): career, country, family, God and self. Not surprisingly, the responses I've received through the years have been inconsistent. Basically, each of the five elements has been placed from first to last within the varied responses received from workshop attendees. Judging where these elements fit within your life's plan is more than a game. It's a prudent exercise to identify the sequencing of priorities that will best ensure your life's effectiveness.

After reviewing attendees' responses to this line of inquiry for many years and applying my judgment, I've determined the optimum sequencing of life's developmental building blocks to best ensure living beings will have their best opportunity to succeed in and enjoy life. My sequencing, which follows, might surprise some, but I'll consider this writing a success if it makes readers think and evaluate their priorities as they plan the balance of their lives.

### 1. SELF

Less than one attendee in 20 throughout the years has placed self at the top of the priority list, primarily because attendees fail to identify with the focus of their self-examination. Mistakenly, the attendees think self is meant to identify with the amount of attention people give themselves before others. Admittedly, it would be selfish for parents to think of themselves before their children, teachers before their pupils or employers before their employees. If this is as far as one goes identifying with the concept of self, then rightfully so, self slides down the priority list.

But the focus of the inquiry isn't meant to measure one's attention to self vis-à-vis others. Instead, it's intended to measure to what degree a person is able to develop his being completely. Only an individual who

has committed to developing his life assets completely can become a truly effective parent, spouse, friend, citizen, employer, leader, etc. Those who fail to commit to developing their complete selves, deliberately or by default, are assured of living more frustrating lives than secure lives. Therefore, if one wants to leave this earth a better place than when he came to it (which is what should be a universal goal of mankind), become the best person/self possible during your lifetime.

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### 2. GOD

The reason why I position God (religion) second is because life is unfair and can throw debilitating curve balls at anyone any time. Left alone and to our own devices, we can fail and find ourselves without hope when traveling through life without spiritual guidance. We should look at spiritual guidance as a perpetual insurance policy that will ensure the steady light of hope will always be part of our lives. Belief in a spiritual being of our choosing is the most effective way to ensure development of one's self.

### 3. FAMILY

Focus now turns to the building block that sustains life – the family unit. Incomplete families, such as single-parent and dysfunctional families, fail society daily, which means parents have a responsibility (as the circumstances of life best allow) to each

other and society in general to procreate and raise children within enduring two-parent families. Broken families weaken the fiber of life. We too often forget that, as parents, we are the sole 24/7 models of life to our children. When we, as parents, are lax, lazy, late, disrespectful, loud, profane, argumentative and fail to hold ourselves accountable, so, too, our children will follow. Consequently, society suffers, and the family unit is weakened. We have a responsibility to guard the value of the family unit as life itself.

### 4. COUNTRY

The benefits realizable from the above three life values can be diminished only when the country isn't on course. Bad economies undermine business, including the disposable-dollar-dependent golf industry; political strife undermines confidence in the country; and government overspending cheats our grandchildren of secure financial futures. Accordingly, it's imperative American citizens be knowledgeable about, and participate in, government. Speak out, lead and vote. A weakened America undermines the lives and careers of every citizen.

### 5. CAREER

How many readers anticipated I would position career as the fifth and last element within life's natural order? This is because careers will have the best chance to flourish when the above four elements of life pave the way. Conversely, careers can lose ground only when life's order is left to chance.

### FYI

The United States Marine Corps' long-standing motto of "God, country, corps" matches the sequencing presented above, allowing for the fact that corps is the equivalent of career and the two elements of self and family aren't included within this priority listing because they're embodied within the team concept of corps. Nothing will serve the golf industry's noble warriors better than adopting the credo of the country's most noble warriors. **GCI**