

# What Is My Life Purpose?



**Part of the "Living by Learning"™ series**

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**"Please... tell me who you are and what you want. And if you think those are simple questions, keep in mind that most people live their entire lives without arriving at an answer."**

**Gary Zukav**

Here is the question: What in the world are YOU doing? I mean, what are YOU doing besides "enjoying yourself while you wait to die"?  
What kind of impact are you making?

Colleen Joy Page explains it beautifully:

"The day you start asking the big questions, like: **"Why am I here?"** And **"Who am I?"** and, "What is the **purpose of life?**" That is the day you take your first step to finding your soul.

Step 1 happens when you are not satisfied with an external source for answers, when you decide to **find your own truth**. If you do not ask questions you will adopt surrogate truth - truth born of another. You will have belief without knowing. You may believe that you have a soul, but you will be looking outwards to other people's ideas about what that means and you will be denied an internal experience of your own spiritual identity. By asking questions and seeking an internal truth, you take step 1."

Dan Millman reflects on his "wake-up call" in life, (which was a series of dreams) in his book *the Wisdom of the Peaceful Warrior*:

"To swim across a pond, we have to leave one shore to reach another. Socrates (*his mentor*) showed me that other shore.

Until I reached a point of disillusionment with my future, I would not willingly release the consolations of conventional life and venture into the unknown."

### **WHAT IS MEANT BY PURPOSE?**

Human being's lives are mostly all the same. You may recognise some of the following events in your life:

You're born  
You eat and sleep  
You play with toys  
You go to school  
You play little league/netball/footy/cricket/rugby  
You go to school  
You leave high school  
You learn to drive  
You go to more school, but you pay more for it now  
You get a job  
You get married  
You buy a house  
You have kids  
You watch your kids eat, sleep, play and go to school  
You work, work, and work  
You retire  
You die

That's basically life, isn't it?

Personally I'd rather think of these as just events. There is so much more to life.

Jim Rohn, author of Twelfth Pillar of Success believes what sets the successful people apart from the not-so successful is that they don't just live the average life. They don't just pass time. They make an impact. They have something compelling in their life that drives them - something that gives them an answer when they are asked that question I opened with: What in the world are you doing?

He suggests that if you don't know, then maybe you need to reflect on what you are doing, what your life is about, and how you can explode the mundane bubble you may be living in!

So - If you're serious about finding this out, it's important to focus your attention and your awareness. Focus means making it an intention and becoming more fully present.

This makes it possible to really experience what you're choosing to focus on.

Personally, I've learnt to try and experience things with a childlike intensity, as if you are truly interested in enquiring and learning.

It helps to regard each day as a new, long, glorious and beautiful day.

In order to do this, don't make presumptions about anything, but start each moment as a new moment.

Your world opens up as you start to seek, question, and dig for a better understanding.

You may feel that you merely go through the daily motions of your days. You eat, shower, brush hair, teeth etc. You do things you've done a million times before without having to pay specific attention anymore.

If you train yourself to pay attention to things again - you'll be brought into the present moment and you can make every moment of your life extraordinary.

You already know that life is a series of moments - (many, many moments).

Therefore, logically, the quality of each of these moments determines the quality of your life.

If you follow through on creating quality moments all the time, you'll start to take ownership of yourself and of your life. This means that you can do what you desire with your life.

Your life becomes a blank sheet of paper. You can choose whatever you want to do

Your ultimate purpose, journey and destination in life is determined and followed by you, not somebody else.

An important goal (yes - a goal) in your life is to have a complete and balanced relationship with yourself. Herein lies your source of peace and happiness.

There are three things that give your life a meaning:

Purpose, Vision and Spirit.

Do you perhaps know what each of these things mean to you?

Chris Widener says that

***'You will do well to get it in your mind that some day you will be seventy years old and you will be at a certain place, and the only thing that got you there was the choices you made all along the way.'***

Knowing your purpose frees you from becoming a victim. You'll understand that you chose this life and its experiences. There are no mistakes, only opportunities. Choosing and creating all your moments translates into many opportunities.

We do sometimes need to be reminded that each of us has a different path in life. So, if you understand your personal path – you'll have no need to compare yourself to others or try and compete with them. You'll understand that there is no better or worse path. All the paths just ARE.

You'll understand that no matter what you do – it's always the right thing. Being on your path is the only place you belong. By finding your own inner purpose, you'll move yourself away from the arena of continual comparison and striving. By discovering your unique reason for being here, you'll have an inner sense of importance, comfort and security from knowing YOU.

Know your purpose. Nothing will bring you a more fulfilling joy than knowing what it is that you are here for on this earth. Not knowing or understanding this can bring sadness, wondering, fear and lack of fulfillment.

Having a purpose is about having a sense of direction as well as the reason to head there.

It can include an inner drive that makes you want to improve and/or sort out difficulties or a drive away from or towards anything.

As you can expect, this is both rewarding and pleasurable.



Coaching is normally a good place to start by allowing you to focus on your values and finding out how to live them out, regardless of what other people do. A value is something that is important to you. You don't have to explain it or justify it. It's just important to you.

Knowing something like this is especially important because, as you're very likely aware, you don't live in a vacuum. Life and people carry on all around you. Constantly.

Use this knowledge to understand that it doesn't matter what anybody else does in your external world.

So, take the time out and think about what you believe about yourself and life. And also about what your values are. These things play a fundamental role in how you go about exerting ownership of yourself and your life. It's the place to start.

Living from this knowledge and truth gives you the power to live your life fully. And completely. You hold the reins.

### **FEELING OFF PURPOSE**

If you find yourself speaking, acting or doing anything that is not in connection with your soul or path – you may feel any of the following:

- A sense of hollowness
- A feeling of being small
- Discord or confusion
- A draining of your energy
- Continued frustration

This is tricky subject however – because the reality is that whatever you're doing is your choice and hence right for you where you're at.

If, however, your heart is not singing, and you feel there must be something "more" for you – I'd suggest it's time to start looking at making changes.

And this may include the need to make sacrifices. It's all part of being an adult and living in the current world.

Hence, you may find that you feel conflicted about your path from time to time.

But logic dictates that if you feel you're straying off it, that actually means that you **do** know what your path is and why you're are on it. This assists in your full understanding of yourself and your situation (self-awareness). It's useful to know upfront that detours are often part of the plan.

Who knows what you learn and pick up along the way?

Another important thing to bear in mind is that if you find yourself being worn down by climbing over treacherous obstacles and knocking your head against brick walls, it may be time for life-review.

Life is about living and learning. So, don't merely stick things out because you feel you're committed to THIS purpose.

### **WHERE TO START?**

***I don't regard life as a work project, honestly. I do see it as a challenging, rewarding, exciting, rich and diverse, unexpected and rather fantastic experience. But you have to give it a bit of thought if you want to get the best out of it.***

***Richard Templar, The Rules Of Life***

I found the following exercise in the book, *The Success Principles by Jack Canfield* and have reflected back on it many times over the past years to make sure I'm remaining true to it.

It's simple. And effective. So I encourage you to try it as follows:

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. List 2 or 3 unique personal qualities you may have. Eg perseverance & creativity
2. List a few ways that you enjoy expressing these qualities in your interaction with others eg. To inspire and guide
3. Create a picture of the perfect world in your mind's eye. What does this world look like? How is everyone interacting with each other? How does it feel? Write this answer in a statement. Use the present tense. Let yourself free to describe this ultimate condition, this perfect world as you see it.
  - o *Everyone is working hard & having fun all the time achieving what they want to achieve individually.*

The idea is now to put the whole three previous ideas together in one purpose statement.

Eg. I use my perseverance and creativity to inspire and guide everyone to work hard and have fun all the time achieving what they want to achieve individually.

Easy enough? But it can be quite eye-opening!

But the reality is that as humans, we usually have a tendency to think that to succeed we have to set goals, work hard, struggle and chase achievements and acknowledgement.

This is merely ego. And an inflated sense of self importance.

But – when you're living on purpose, you'll let inspiration drive you instead. And when you're truly inspired you'll be surprised that don't wander whether it will work out.

For great reading on inspirational living read Dr Wayne Dyer's work.

So- don't waste time on things you don't believe in or which don't resonate well with your soul. Instead, live purposefully. This means deliberately within and according to your purpose.

This is a matter of priority. Let your actions and lifestyle reflect your purpose and you will feel deep satisfaction and joy!

Don't react to external circumstances or let them cause you to be swayed from your purpose.

This only eventually causes frustration.

Following the path of the heart may often take strength and courage but in the end, its rewards are happiness and peace.

**WHAT IS THE MEANING TO YOUR LIFE?**

***There is a crucial difference between a life spent pursuing desire and a life lived in pursuit of purpose and meaning.  
Life is not suffering; it's just that you will suffer it, rather than enjoy it, until you let go of your mind's attachments and just go for the ride.***

***Socrates' words from Wisdom of the Peaceful Warrior by Dan Millman***

When you lack purpose, vision and spirit in your life it's the same as starving your inner being as you would starve your physical body of food and water.

The most meaningful thing you can live for is to reach your full potential. Most people believe that they are here to do something and so they spend their time worrying about what it is they're here for and meant to be doing. By focusing on what you "should be" doing or achieving you may be missing the point. Just being who you are in this life should be your focus. That's the reason you're here, after all!

I'm sure you've heard of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. As humans, once Maslow's basic needs are met, we always want more. You'll find you want to enhance something you call your experience of living. You start to reach for self-realisation and/or self actualization.

The impulse that drives you to search for meaning is valid and honourable. It is what being human is all about – but seeking answers OUTSIDE of yourself is just wasted effort, time and energy.

Dr Wayne Dyer uses a powerful analogy of an orange.



He describes the fact that an orange is an orange. From any angle you look at the orange you'll see externally it is, in fact, an orange. The real proof however comes in when you squeeze the orange, apply any amount of pressure on it. What comes out?

Orange juice.

The orange is still... undoubtedly... an orange. Regardless of who is looking at it and what kind of pressure is being applied to it. The orange never wants to do anything besides "be an orange".

If you could be your True "Orange-Self" – you'll feel a sense of peace, energy, joy and inspiration. Always and regardless.

Ironically, this doesn't mean you're really changing anything – you're merely (but not so easily!) releasing yourself to become you.  
This doesn't mean your life becomes easy – but easier being YOU.



There are three things that give meaning to your life:  
Purpose (which we're speaking about here), Vision and Spirit

### **Vision**

As you can see from the Jack Canfield exercise, having a vision helps to inform you and direct your immediate purpose. You created a visual picture first and then added yourself and your qualities into it.

Many people who do this exercise in my workshops sit back and say "Aha!" And then the vision helps you align your actions within your overall belief and value system. And that's when you feel the changes starting.

But, as with everything, you need to know (and understand) what your beliefs and values are. Creating a vision from a good sense of your values, helps relate your various purposes into an overall meaning which adds a sense of satisfaction and uniqueness to your existence.

A good idea for you to get into touch with what's really important to you is to Write your own eulogy.

Whilst you do that:

- Imagine *what* you want people to say about you
- Imagine *who* will be there
- Imagine *how* the people will say what they're saying

### **Spirit**

***If you are guided by the stars, you will only be able to travel at night  
If you are guided by a map, you will be dependent on a piece of paper that  
is easily lost.***

***If you are guided by your soul, you will always choose the right path.  
Unknown***

Spirit is what we're ultimately about as humans. Yes – that inner spirit.

Your spirit encompasses the wholeness of you and brings a sense of harmony into what you do.

It's also what allows you to connect with others and with your universe.



***A knowledge of the path cannot be substituted for putting one foot in front of the other.  
M.C Richards***

### **WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THIS ALL MAKE?**

According to the Jackson Brown song:

"Into a dancer you have grown from the seeds someone else has thrown. Go on ahead and throw some seeds of your own, somewhere between the time you arrive and the time you go home, because in the end there is one dance you will do alone."

You've now spent some time thinking about your greatest gifts and realized that every person is a unique being. More so - There is only one of you in the universe. You have many obvious gifts and many other gifts that are still waiting to be discovered.

Reflect back on the perfect-world picture you created earlier and ask yourself how you can best serve mankind. Your picture I'm sure was a way to improve mankind. Most pictures are.

There are eight principles for aligning with your life purpose:

1. Love what you're doing: Do more of what you like to do. Your passion shows up in the things with which you lose track of time
2. Be discerning: Learn to say "No, Thank You." Don't just "do time". Regularly question your motives when making choices.

3. Listen: Follow through on persistent intuitive messages.
4. Act: Do whatever is necessary to keep the deliberate forward motion of where your intuition is leading you
5. Keep your mind & heart open: You never know. Anything (and everything) is possible.
6. Review: Regularly check-in with yourself. Who are you being and what are you doing? Are you on purpose?
7. Trust. Trust the process you're in. There are no accidents.
8. Express Gratitude: Gratitude empowers you and opens further doors for you.

I truly believe, however, that one of the most important results in your journey to find your purpose is the realization of, "How can I serve others?"

Because if you aren't helping others - if you aren't making an impact - you're just taking up space, eating food and waiting to die.

If you know, then you are good to go - live it and make an impact!

***Life is without meaning. You bring the meaning to it.  
The meaning of life is whatever you ascribe it to be.  
Being alive is the meaning.***

***Joseph Campbell***