

3 DISCOVER YOUR UNIQUE PURPOSE: WHAT WERE YOU PUT ON THIS EARTH TO DO?

Janet and I discovered long ago what we were put on this earth to do. We determined our purpose in life, our "right livelihood." We discovered how to inject passion and determination into every activity we undertake. And we learned how purpose can bring an aspect of fun and fulfillment to virtually everything we do.

Now we'd like to help uncover the same secret for you.

You see, without a purpose in life, it's easy to get sidetracked on your life's journey. It's easy to wander and drift, accomplishing little.

But with a purpose, everything in life seems to fall into place. To be "on purpose" means you're doing what you love to do, doing what you're good at and accomplishing what's important to you. When you are on purpose, the people, resources and opportunities you need naturally gravitate toward you. The world benefits, too.

With a life purpose—carefully developed and clearly stated—you suddenly have a basis for making all your major life decisions, for setting a lifetime's worth of goals and for pursuing one activity or goal versus another.

Not only will thinking about and pursuing your life purpose get you to where you want to be, it will make the journey more enjoyable.

In this chapter, you'll learn that your greatest challenge will be to discover and use your natural talents, resources and abilities to their highest and best use—for you... your family... and the world. Let's get started now!

What's In a Mission Statement? The Life Purpose of Some of History's Greatest Names

Surprisingly, some of the greatest names in history have had some of the simplest personal mission statements. Titans of industry, leaders of major world governments, entertainment giants—have all had a definitive life purpose that drives their daily actions, helping them create great successes and positively impact generations of people.

Take Thomas Edison, for example: His stated mission was *to create inventions that people needed, that people would pay for and that would be profitable.* Imagine having *that* mission statement as a road map to guide your daily actions! If an activity didn't fit that formula, you wouldn't work on it. Period. If something was getting you off track in life, you'd be able to recognize its short-comings before spending too much time, energy or resources on it. If something didn't fit *all* the criteria, you'd move on to the

next thing that did. See the kind of focus a stated purpose or mission statement can give you?

Let's look at other historical figures that have had a stated purpose that guides their actions and energy.

John F. Kennedy: *To put a man on the moon in this decade.*

Andrew Carnegie, American steel industrialist, founder of the public library system, and at one time the richest man in the world. *To spend the first half of my life making as much money as I can — and the second half giving it away.*

Stanley Mason, inventor of the Band-Aid, disposable diapers and other consumable consumer products. *Create one invention a year that will generate \$10 million a year in royalties forever.*

Jack Canfield: *To inspire and empower people to live their highest vision in a context of love and joy.*

Finding Your Personal Life Purpose: The "Why" Behind Everything You'll Do

Have you ever written down your life purpose? **If not, ask yourself this question:** *If I were provided with everything I wanted and needed to release my full potential and achieve my highest vision, what would my purpose be?*

Finding your purpose is really discovering what you were put on this Earth to do. Your purpose can tell you what to accomplish, for whom, how to accomplish it and in what time frame. When you discover your purpose, life flows effortlessly. Opportunity seems to fall in your lap. Resources and relationships find you easily. Small successes build upon one another to create unstoppable momentum.

But how does purpose differ from goals or action plans?

Purpose is the "why" — the *reason* you create the goals you create and pursue the activities you do. It's the reason you strive to achieve the results you're looking for.

Goals are merely the "what" you'll accomplish and action plans are simply the "how" you'll accomplish those goals. Without purpose as the compass, goals and action plans are meaningless.

To determine your life's purpose — to develop it in crystal-clear words that are compelling to you and others — take time now to complete the exercises that follow. Then, finish by writing your own heartfelt personal mission statement.

Life Purpose Exercise

1. List two of your unique personal qualities, such as *enthusiasm* and *creativity*.

2. List one or two ways you enjoy expressing those qualities when interacting with others, such as *to support* and *to inspire*.

3. Assume the world is perfect right now. What does this world look like? How is everyone interacting with everyone else? What does it feel like? This is a statement, in present tense, describing the ultimate condition, the perfect world as you see it and feel it. Remember a perfect world is a fun place to be. For example: *Everyone is freely expressing their own unique talents. Everyone is working in harmony. Everyone is expressing love.*

4. Combine the three prior subdivisions of this paragraph into a single statement.

Example: *My purpose is to use my creativity and enthusiasm to support and inspire others to freely express their talents in a harmonious and loving way.*

There are several ways to approach defining your purpose. We learned this version of the life purpose exercise from Arnold M. Patent. You can reach Arnold Patent at 28172 Via Chabas, Mission Viejo, CA 92692. (949) 770-7769. www.arnoldpatent.com.

Finding Purpose in Your Career: Are You Where You Need to Be?

Why do I have the job I have? _____

What purpose or higher good am I serving? _____

Who does my work serve? _____

Do those people need what I provide? ☐ Yes, absolutely! ☐ Maybe. I sometimes wonder. ☐ Not really. They could easily do without it.

What do they do with what I provide? _____

Do they, in turn, help others with what I give them? _____

Could I provide it differently, in a way that would better enable people to pass on the benefits? _____

Is there integrity in what I do for a living? _____ In what way? _____

Is integrity lacking in what I do for a living? _____ In what way? _____

If I could be doing anything I wanted to do, assured that all my living expenses and material needs and desires would somehow be fulfilled, would I be working at this job? ☐ Yes, absolutely! ☐ No, I'd leave tomorrow.

If not, how can I alter this job and make it into something I can be passionate about? _____

If this job ultimately isn't for me, how will I start transitioning into something new? _____

Are there any negative aspects to my work? ☐ No ☐ Yes Am I the source for that? _____

Can I change any negative aspects? ☐ No ☐ Yes How? _____

Can I achieve my purpose only in this job? _____

How else can I achieve my purpose, if not in this job? _____

Can I stay in this job and achieve my higher purpose? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, how? If no, why not? _____

If I could wake up every morning, excited to face the day and eager to get to work, what would a day like this look like? _____

Finding Purpose in Your Marriage or Committed Relationship: Are You More "On Purpose" as Two?

When you first met your spouse or partner, what activities were you both passionately interested in? _____

What goals for your future did you both share? _____

Did you ever write down those goals? ☐ Yes ☐ No If not, when will you do so? _____

How have you pursued or met those goals? _____

What vision did you originally have for your relationship? _____

How could the two of you better support each other in reaching your full potential as individuals? _____

Do you get that support now? ☐ Yes ☐ No If not, what needs to change? _____

Finding Purpose in Your Family Relationships: What Were You Put on This Earth to Do?

Are you still close to your parents? ☐ Yes ☐ No Your grandparents? ☐ Yes ☐ No Other seniors in your family? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What's the most important reason you stay in touch with these "seniors"? _____

Do you participate in frequent family activities with these "seniors"? ☐ Yes ☐ No What kind? _____

Do you have children? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are the most important lessons you'll teach them in your lifetime? _____

What's the greatest hope or aspiration you have for their future? _____

How important to you is that future? _____

What steps do you regularly take to support that future? _____

Does your family, including your children, support the activities or pursuits that interest you most? _____

In what way do they support you? _____

Does your family regularly participate in any activity that serves a goal or group of people outside your immediate household?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, what is it? _____

How did you get involved in this activity? _____

Would your family like to participate in any activity that serves a goal or group of people outside your immediate household?

☐ Yes ☐ No If so, what is it? _____

What might each family member do to support that desire or effort? _____

Have you all committed to that plan by writing it down on paper? ☐ Yes ☐ No If not, when will you do so? _____

What specifically would you expect your efforts to accomplish? _____

Finding Purpose in Your Civic Activities: Does Your Calling Shine Through?

Are you active in organized civic groups? ☐ Yes... Service Organization(s) ☐ Yes... Social Club(s) ☐ Yes... Hobby Club(s) ☐ No... None

What is your reason for joining and staying active? _____

What satisfaction or enjoyment do you get out of these groups? _____

Do any of your groups serve others as a regular activity or stated goal? _____

Do you participate in those activities? _____

Have you taken on leadership roles in these groups? _____ In what way? _____

How do these groups serve to further your career or personal goals, even if they just provide relaxation time? _____

Has meeting other members led to good things happening in your life outside club activities? ☐ Yes, absolutely! ☐ No, I wish it would.

What kinds of surprising benefits have resulted from your club associations? _____

What other groups might you join that would further your life goals? _____

Finding Purpose as an Individual: What's the Best Use of Your Time, Talent and Passion?

What are your best talents? _____

Are you using those talents every day? ☐ Yes, absolutely! In what ways? _____

☐ Not really. I could do better. In what ways? _____

If the world at-large could benefit from your talents, how would they benefit? _____

How would they access your talent? _____

How might you make your talent more available to the world? _____

What takes up the majority of your time now? _____

What would be a better use of your time? _____

How can you change your schedule so you have more time for this better use? _____

Putting It All Together: Defining Your Purpose

Now it's time to put your thoughts together into a single statement that summarizes who you are and what you are doing here... a single statement that explains what gives you zest for living... what gives you a sense of joy, creativity and spontaneity that enables you to live every day more passionately than the last. Determining what provides you with enthusiasm, excitement and fulfillment will help you develop a purpose for your life – one that not only satisfies you personally, but serves the world too. Complete the statements below to give you the clues you need to write your personal statement of purpose.

Whether in my career or in my private life, the activity I am most passionate about and have been most passionate about over time is...

The reason I'm so passionate about this activity is... _____

I could pursue this activity full-time if I... _____

I could thrive in my family and committed relationships, while at the same time pursuing this activity, if I... _____

This activity serves others in that it... _____

When I daydream, the life I visualize for myself includes... _____

When I'm at the end of my life, I hope to look back on my life and be satisfied that I accomplished... _____

I know I will have led a life of meaning if I... _____

Now combine all your thoughts above into the single statement below – a statement that explains a life pursuit you can be passionate about and dedicated to long-term... a statement that explains what drives you, what keeps you enthusiastic and what brings you fulfillment. That's the definition of a powerful life purpose!

The best use of my productive time, heartfelt effort and passionate dedication is to...
