

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF PURPOSE

A sense of life purpose promotes physical, mental and spiritual health.

People who seek meaning beyond themselves are healthier, happier, and live longer. So, it's vital to our well-being that we maintain a strong sense of purpose.

For some people, life purpose is a spiritual concept, or has a religious dimension. For others, it's a more secular notion, a need to be valued as a member of a family or group.

However you view purpose—or even if you don't think about it at all—we all need to be needed. Mattering matters.

As we mature through the phases of our life, expecting various levels of psychological, emotional and spiritual growth, we might come to think more deeply about our life purpose and find ourselves yearning for deeper levels of meaning.

At some phase of our lives, we might feel stuck, going nowhere, drifting without direction, wondering “what is the point of it all?”

WHAT IS PURPOSE?

The dictionary defines purpose as:

1. The reason for which something exists
2. An intended or desired result

Both definitions apply to your own purpose, but the first one can seem a little intimidating. *Why do I exist?* But you can simplify the concept in your mind by focusing on the second. A “life's purpose” is really nothing more (or less) than your intention to live a certain way. It is realized by getting to know your authentic self, exploring your gifts or natural talents and passions—and choosing the best possible expression to share them with the world.

“Finding” your purpose is a misleading concept because it's not something you have to go out and get, but rather something you need to turn within and unlock. You've already got it—even if you haven't clarified it yet.

How do we unlock it? By looking in the most essential places—our gifts, passions, and values. Why would we pursue a life purpose that doesn't match the authentic essence of who we are?

Your purpose will always be something that:

- **You feel that you're naturally good at and enjoy doing.**
- **You feel passionate and care deeply about.**
- **You feel fits your values and ways you prefer to operate in the world.**

Your life purpose will always express your gifts, passions, and values. No exceptions. Does that inspire a little sigh of relief for you? Hopefully it will.

Before you can create your life purpose statement, you need to believe that you have one. No guide, of course, can convince you of this. You must arrive at your own decision.

PURPOSE REFLECTIONS

There are no rigid formulas for how to write your purpose statement, but there are many helpful techniques to assist you. Here are seven mind-changing ideas that have brought powerful results to many people over the years. Use them to see what you can discover about yourself and your dreams.

1. Think about this sentence for a moment: "From family and friends who knew me when I was very young, I have heard that my "special gift" is _____". How have these "gifts" persisted in your life?

2. Imagine being on your deathbed, still clear and coherent, when your best friend drops in to visit you. Your friend asks, "Did you give and receive love?" "Were you authentically you?" "Did you make a small difference in the world?" How did you answer the questions? _____
3. Get out your calculator and do some "life math." Multiply your age x 365 (____). Then, subtract that number from 30,000, an average life expectancy. Divide that number by 365. Once you get clear that you have (____) more years to wake up, it might inspire you to live more courageously now. How do you feel about how you are spending your most precious currency—your time?

4. How did you wake up this morning? Did you resist getting up or did you get out of bed with energy and purpose? Think about the way you wake up, these days, and you will learn something about your life's purpose. Your mood getting up most days? _____
5. Write the question, "What are my gifts?" on five index cards. Give them to five people who know you well and ask them to write their response to the question on the card. Put them all together in a place where you can see them. What theme or thread do you see?

6. Are you curious? What are you most curious about, these days? Here are some clues that will help you answer:
 - a. Time passes quickly when you're exploring this
 - b. It's so interesting, you can't help spending time on it
 - c. A bad day doing this is better than a good day doing most other things_____

7. Look around you for potential models and mentors. Ask yourself who is really leading the kind of life and doing the kind of work that you envision in the next phase of your life. Initiate a courageous conversation to find out what they like **most** and **least** about their work.

These seven reflections will be used as part of your "writing my purpose statement" exercise.

PURPOSE CLUES

The purpose question is answered from the inside out. It's only by looking inward that you can begin to answer the big questions. When you pay attention to the key indicators in your life, not the superficialities, you can then name, work, and live on purpose. Here are two clues:

Clue #1: What are my strongest beliefs? Jot down your thoughts on the following:

Community: What do you think your responsibility is to others?

Service: What is life asking of you, today?

Values: What do you stand for?

Legacy: What do you think your life's legacy will be?

Wisdom: Who are the wise elders in your life? What have you learned from them?

Compassion: What do you think is its nature and importance?

Source: If you have a concept of God, Supreme Being, or Higher Power, what do you think the Source is urging you to do?

Clue #2: What are my passions?

Using the strongest beliefs you just reflected upon, what curiosities or passions emerged for you? What moves you? What do you feel needs doing in the world?

I'm really curious about _____

I really care about _____

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Using your beliefs and passions as clues, draft your own purpose statement. Write out a number of statements to see how they look and feel to you.

Examples: "To bring out the best in my colleagues." "To help people become as much as they can be."
"To make the world a little greener and kinder."

My purpose draft(s): _____

Reflecting on your draft purpose statement, write a single sentence which expresses your reason for getting up in the morning.

I get up in the morning to: _____

Writing a purpose statement is challenging and requires much thought. If you find it difficult to write your purpose statement, don't be discouraged. You can get a good start by trying this simple formula: List three values that are important to you, three of your personal strengths, and three people, groups, or causes outside yourself you'd like to impact.

Because I value _____

I will use my strengths in _____

to positively impact _____

PURPOSE IN PRACTICE

Use the following chart for one week to aid you on your quest to unlock your purpose. First thing each morning, capture your ideas and thoughts about why you got up that day. At the end of each day, write what "purpose moments" made you feel as if you were living or working on purpose.

	This morning, I got up to: (write your purpose statement)	This evening, reflecting on my day, I felt "on purpose" when I:
MONDAY		
TUESDAY		
WEDNESDAY		
THURSDAY		
FRIDAY		
SATURDAY		
SUNDAY		

BRIDGING THE GAP

Reconciling your path to purpose with your financial priorities is an important step toward achieving your goals. This simple workbook can help you understand where you are and where you want to be. All you need to do is estimate the cost of what you'll need and want as you pursue a purpose-driven life (Expenses). Then add up all the money you'll have available (Income). Then subtract the Income from the Expenses to find your "gap." From there you can work with your advisor to explore strategies and build a plan to help close that gap and fund the lifestyle you envision.

WHAT WILL I NEED?	Essential
Housing (mortgage/rent, utilities, maintenance)	\$ _____ /yr
Food	\$ _____ /yr
Transportation (vehicle payments, fuel, maintenance)	\$ _____ /yr
Healthcare (Medicare/Medigap, co-pays, uncovered services/drugs/supplies)	\$ _____ /yr
Insurance (auto, home, life, health, long-term care, other)	\$ _____ /yr
Personal Care (clothing, products/services)	\$ _____ /yr
Income Taxes	\$ _____ /yr
Other	\$ _____ /yr
1. TOTAL ESSENTIAL EXPENSES	\$ _____ /yr
WHAT WOULD I LIKE TO HAVE?	Discretionary
Entertainment	\$ _____ /yr
Hobbies	\$ _____ /yr
Dining Out	\$ _____ /yr
Travel	\$ _____ /yr
Home Improvement	\$ _____ /yr
Other	\$ _____ /yr
2. TOTAL DISCRETIONARY EXPENSES	\$ _____ /yr
WHAT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE?	Extra
Legacy	\$ _____ /yr
Education	\$ _____ /yr
Second Home	\$ _____ /yr
Toys	\$ _____ /yr
Gifts/Charity	\$ _____ /yr
Other	\$ _____ /yr
3. TOTAL EXTRA EXPENSES	\$ _____ /yr
TOTAL OF ALL EXPENSES (1, 2 AND 3)	\$ _____ /yr

WHAT CAN I COUNT ON?	Guaranteed Income
Pension Plans	\$ _____ /yr
Social Security	\$ _____ /yr
Annuities	\$ _____ /yr
Life Insurance	\$ _____ /yr
Other	\$ _____ /yr
1. TOTAL GUARANTEED INCOME	\$ _____ /yr
WHAT CAN I PLAN FOR?	Non-guaranteed Income
Employer-Sponsored Retirement Plans (401(k), 403(b), SEP, etc.)	\$ _____ /yr
IRAs (Traditional, Roth, rollover)	\$ _____ /yr
Bank Accounts (savings, checking, CDs)	\$ _____ /yr
Mutual Funds	\$ _____ /yr
Individual Securities	\$ _____ /yr
Part-time Work	\$ _____ /yr
Rental Income	\$ _____ /yr
Other	\$ _____ /yr
2. TOTAL NON-GUARANTEED INCOME	\$ _____ /yr
TOTAL OF ALL INCOME (1 AND 2)	\$ _____ /yr

WHAT'S MY GAP?	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ _____ /yr
(minus) TOTAL INCOME	\$ _____ /yr
INCOME GAP	\$ _____ /yr

EXPLORING PURPOSE

This workbook has introduced concepts and exercises intended to help you begin unlocking your purpose. But to continue on the path toward living purposefully, we recommend these resources to help you along the way.

BOOKS

"The Power of Purpose: Find Meaning, Live Longer, Better"

Richard J. Leider

"Repacking Your Bags: Lighten Your Load for the Good Life"

Richard J. Leider & David A. Shapiro

"The Big Picture: A Guide to Finding Your Purpose in Life"

Christine B. Whelan, Ph.D.

"What Color is Your Parachute? For Retirement"

John E. Nelson & Richard Nelson Bolles

"Financial Intelligence: How to Make Smart, Values-Based Decisions with Your Money and Your Life"

Doug Lennick, C.F.P. & Kathleen Jordan, Ph.D.