

What is Your Life's Purpose?

By Kristin Mackey

...A pause follows with an attempt to grasp for further clarity, "Do you mean what I do for a living?" the participant eagerly asks...

"No, your life's purpose", I reiterate.

Confused, she expands her question, "With family, friends or work?"

Then I prepare for the longest silence in the seminar when I clarify,

"Why were you born?"

Being a professional speaker, I am often asked a variety of questions. I have found one question in particular to repeat itself regardless of the topic. It is the question of personal direction. Whether a change had been imposed or the participant was contemplating one, "what to do next" was the common dilemma. The idea of living a unique life consistent with one's highest values excited many, but confused most.

Purposeful living is not about picking a "purpose" out of a book and then signing up for the courses. It is about what lies beneath years of conditioning to that part of you that feels complete joy and timelessness when engaged in something. What makes you feel joyful and free? To live on purpose is to be congruent. It allows for the outward expression of your most authentic self.

Make Room

A good place to start is to begin to recognize what you don't want in your life. It could be as simple as eliminating clutter or as challenging as starting a new career. By clearing out feelings of disempowerment, frustration or disinterest (whether by action steps or changes in perception) you begin to make room for what you really want.

Pay Attention

As you make room in your life, you begin to hear your own unique voice: A voice that reminds you of your deepest desires. What really wakes you up with excitement?

If you find this challenging, simply try observing yourself. What books are you drawn to? What kinds of stores do you visit? What ideas thrill you? What do you do that does not feel like work? Don't judge, just watch yourself. Truths about your passions will reveal themselves to you.

Be Joyful

As you start eliminating what does not work and uncover what you do enjoy, it is important to add more joy to your daily routine to raise your "feelin' good" energy. When you FEEL good, you tend to attract more good things into your life. Like spices, these little items add flavor, lift your spirit and empower you as you move in the direction of your deepest desires.

What brings you joy? It is not what you think should make you happy, but what really makes you feel light and joyous inside? As the whisperings of your passion get louder, activities you really enjoy point at the "how" in terms of personal expression. For example, if you are passionate about helping children and you love to paint, explore putting the two together.

Joy is the secret ingredient in personal transformation.

Following your joy does not have to mean a 360 degree change overnight. Think in terms of adding more joy to a preexisting condition or circumstance. For example, take that class you would love to take, quit the habit that feels like a drain and add a hobby that makes you smile. If you love clothes, dress beautifully and create a closet sanctuary. Have fun.

If you love writing and being creative, grab a journal to write in, paste clippings or draw. Garden more if that is your jazz or paint. Adding joy can be as simple as a new lipstick, weekly phone call or a pack of markers. In my case, I just love being silly. So I drew smiling and laughing faces on a bunch of ocean rocks and sprinkled them all over my house. Every time I see their big grins, they make me giggle and that lightens my mood.

Have Courage to Follow your Personal Compass

I have often found that participants in my seminars had the most trouble with personal trust. Just as it's important to learn from others, it is even more important to really know and honor yourself. Too often we do not do the things we would like for fear of what others may think. Ironically, the very folks that are doing the judging are often the least happy with their lives! Following their "critical compass" is not really a good idea if you are moving toward your own vision of happiness and success. By activating your compass you make learning from others a wonderful and enriching experience. Their knowledge and insights add to your purpose – not thwart its direction.

The happiest and most successful people did not get that way by being like anyone else. They were themselves. They felt their internal compass and followed it. They let their passion guide them infusing them with energy, clarity and ideas. They followed their joy without apology. As a result, they were able to share their gifts with others. When you release guilt around making yourself happy, you actually help everyone around you to do the same. Your courageous example serves as a sort of "license to happiness" for others.

Move in the Direction of Happiness

Whether contemplating a new direction or actively engaged in change, following what feels good is a sound start. When a particular direction gives you energy, it often means its resonating with your most authentic self.

By following their vision, many courageous people found deep satisfaction and contentment. They may have started slowly toward creating the life of their dreams with small incremental changes, but they started. And no outside factors like age, money or life circumstance discouraged them. They seemed to have discovered the answer to the question "What is your life's purpose?", before it was asked...

"It is to be happy and share happiness with others...what else could it be?"...she said assuredly...

She smiled and said, "And yes, I've found it to be that simple"...

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