

How to Discover Your Life Purpose in About 20 Minutes

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How do you discover your real purpose in life? I'm not talking about your job, your daily responsibilities, or even your long-term goals. I mean the real reason why you're here at all — the very reason you exist.

Perhaps you're a rather nihilistic person who doesn't believe you have a purpose and that life has no meaning. Doesn't matter. Not believing that you have a purpose won't prevent you from discovering it, just as a lack of belief in gravity won't prevent you from tripping. All that a lack of belief will do is make it take longer, so if you're one of those people, just change the number 20 in the title of this blog entry to 40 (or 60 if you're really stubborn). Most likely though if you don't believe you have a purpose, then you probably won't believe what I'm saying anyway, but even so, what's the risk of investing an hour just in case?

Here's a story about Bruce Lee which sets the stage for this little exercise. A master martial artist asked Bruce to teach him everything Bruce knew about martial arts. Bruce held up two cups, both filled with liquid. "The first cup," said Bruce, "represents all of your knowledge about martial arts. The second cup represents all of my knowledge about martial arts. If you want to fill your cup with my knowledge, you must first empty your cup of your knowledge."

If you want to discover your true purpose in life, you must first empty your mind of all the false purposes you've been taught (including the idea that you may have no purpose at all).

So how to discover your purpose in life? While there are many ways to do this, some of them fairly involved, here is one of the simplest that anyone can do. The more open you are to this process, and the more you expect it to work, the faster it will work for you. But not being open to it or having doubts about it or thinking it's an entirely idiotic and meaningless waste of time won't prevent it from working as long as you stick with it — again, it will just take longer to converge.

Here's what to do:

1. Take out a blank sheet of paper or open up a word processor where you can type (I prefer the latter because it's faster).
2. Write at the top, "What is my true purpose in life?"
3. Write an answer (any answer) that pops into your head. It doesn't have to be a complete sentence. A short phrase is fine.
4. Repeat step 3 until you write the answer that makes you cry. This is your purpose.

That's it. It doesn't matter if you're a counselor or an engineer or a bodybuilder. To some people this exercise will make perfect sense. To others it will seem utterly stupid. Usually it takes 15-20 minutes to clear your head of all the clutter and the social conditioning about what you think your purpose in life is. The false answers will come from your mind and your memories. But when the true answer finally arrives, it will feel like it's coming to you from a different source entirely.

For those who are very entrenched in low-awareness living, it will take a lot longer to get all the false answers out, possibly more than an hour. But if you persist, after 100 or 200 or maybe even 500 answers, you'll be struck by the answer that causes you to surge with emotion, the answer that breaks you. If you've never done this, it may very well sound silly to you. So let it seem silly, and do it anyway.

As you go through this process, some of your answers will be very similar. You may even re-list previous answers. Then you might head off on a new tangent and generate 10-20 more answers along some other theme. And that's fine. You can list whatever answer pops into your head as long as you just keep writing.

At some point during the process (typically after about 50-100 answers), you may want to quit and just can't see it converging. You may feel the urge to get up and make an excuse to do something else. That's normal. Push past this resistance, and just keep writing. The feeling of resistance will eventually pass.

You may also discover a few answers that seem to give you a mini-surge of emotion, but they don't quite make you cry — they're just a bit off. Highlight those answers as you go along, so you can come back to them to generate new permutations. Each reflects a piece of your purpose, but individually they aren't complete. When you start getting these kinds of answers, it just means you're getting warm. Keep going.

It's important to do this alone and with no interruptions. If you're a nihilist, then feel free to start with the answer, "I don't have a purpose," or "Life is meaningless," and take it from there. If you keep at it, you'll still eventually converge.

When I did this exercise, it took me about 25 minutes, and I reached my final answer at step 106. Partial pieces of the answer (mini-surges) appeared at steps 17, 39, and 53, and then the bulk of it fell into place and was refined through steps 100-106. I felt the feeling of resistance (wanting to get up and do something else, expecting the process to fail, feeling very impatient and even irritated) around steps 55-60. At step 80 I took a 2-minute break to close my eyes, relax, clear my mind, and to focus on the intention for the answer to come to me — this was helpful as the answers I received after this break began to have greater clarity.

Here was my final answer: *to live consciously and courageously, to resonate with love and compassion, to awaken the great spirits within others, and to leave this world in peace.*

When you find your own unique answer to the question of why you're here, you will feel it resonate with you deeply. The words will seem to have a special energy to you, and you will feel that energy whenever you read them.

Discovering your purpose is the easy part. The hard part is keeping it with you on a daily basis and working on yourself to the point where you become that purpose.

If you're inclined to ask why this little process works, just put that question aside until after you've successfully completed it. Once you've done that, you'll probably have your own answer to why it works. Most likely if you ask 10 different people why this works (people who've successfully completed it), you'll get 10 different answers, all filtered through their individual belief systems, and each will contain its own reflection of truth.

Obviously, this process won't work if you quit before convergence. I'd guesstimate that 80-90% of people should achieve convergence in less than an hour. If you're really entrenched in your beliefs and resistant to the process, maybe it will take you 5 sessions and 3 hours, but I suspect that such people will simply quit early (like within the first 15 minutes) or won't even attempt it at all. But if you're drawn to read this blog (and haven't been inclined to ban it from your life yet), then it's doubtful you fall into this group.

Reference link:

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2005/01/how-to-discover-your-life-purpose-in-about-20-minutes/>