

Traveling the Purposeful Path

Clarifying Your Life Purpose

Stage One of the Purpose Process©



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~ Clarifying Your Life Purpose ~

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my wife and life partner, Ann, and our daughter, Amber. I love, honor and cherish you both.

I also dedicate this book to the purposeful and passionate people who make up the Life On Purpose Coaches Community and all of our clients who have allowed us to serve them as their life purpose coaches, and in doing so, gave us the room to express our live purposes.

Last of all, I dedicate this book to the many heroes of September 11, who in the face of a most distressing example of a World Off Purpose, then demonstrated the possibility of what a World On Purpose can be through their compassion, commitment and courage.

Acknowledgements

I express my gratitude to the many people who worked behind the scenes to support me in the writing and production of this book.

And special thanks goes to my editor, Linda Mastro for polishing my words with integrity and skill and for offering suggestions on how to make this book a valuable resource that reflects the purpose and intent of Life on Purpose Institute.

Introduction: Why Begin the Journey

What is a life purpose? At first glance this may look like a question with such an obvious answer, that it's pointless to even discuss it. But I have found that there is often a wealth of wisdom in questions we assume we already know how to answer.

I've dedicated my life to exploring many of the different facets and nuances of the idea of life purpose. In 1997 I founded Life On Purpose Institute as a way to explore questions like, "What is a life purpose?" Consequently, I've had the privilege to ask thousands of people that question and many others related to life purpose. I've discovered some very interesting things about our relationship to the notion of having a life purpose. And in one sense, you could say that is what this book is all about -- what I've discovered.

For example, I've discovered that most people answer the question, "What is a life purpose," in a very similar way. Oh, they may use some different words, but the core theme of their responses is quite similar. In other words, there's a common "cultural response" to the question. Unfortunately, this cultural response has acted as an undetected detour sign, sending most of us off the purposeful path right from the start of our journeys.

As a result when many people ask the more personal question, "What is MY life purpose?" the answers they come up with are already off the mark. This book is about exploring a different response to the question, "What is a life purpose?" A response that opens a whole new and different purposeful pathway to explore, a pathway that can lead us into a new world on purpose.

Check the News

Have you checked out the news lately? Pick up any major newspaper or spend a half an hour viewing the evening news. Looks pretty bad, doesn't it? We're killing each other and we're killing the Earth. Here are some interesting facts:

- About 25,000 people are murdered in this country every year.
- Another 100,000 people are raped during that same time.
- Nearly 2.5 million cases of suspected child abuse, sexual abuse and neglect are reported each year. Every day at least 3 children die from abuse and neglect in this country alone.
- Many scientists believe that the loss of genetic diversity is one of our greatest threats, with species extinction currently running at one thousand times the natural rate, 27,000 per year, 75 per day.
- Americans go to the mall more frequently than we go to church. Over 90% of teenage girls in the U. S. consider shopping their favorite pastime, and most teens spend as much time at the mall as at their homes and schools combined.

Many people say we're going to "hell in a hand basket." It's too late for us. They say these facts prove we are inherently evil and that we're doomed to perish. Others blame our governmental system. The rich and affluent point to the poor and unemployed as the problem while the poor and middle-class say it's our economic system. The rich get richer while the poor . . . well, you know the line.

But I don't see it this way. I see another possibility. When I look at what's happening, I see a world without vision, and people without purpose. There's nothing wrong, only something missing. As it says in the Bible, "Without vision, the people perish." And when we don't know why we're truly here, we tend to get into a lot of mischief -- much of which is destructive to ourselves and to the world. Just check the news.

For a moment, settle back in your chair, set aside your cynicism, and take a couple of deep, relaxing breaths. See yourself reading a newspaper in which the headlines reflect a world where all people truly know why they are here on planet Earth. Not only do they know their purpose in life. They are living true to it consistently. Can you imagine what life would be like in such a world? Can you allow even a glimmer of this possibility to shine through?

That's what this book is about -- clear and simple. It's about transforming the world from one that's off purpose to one on purpose -- one person at a time.

Will you be one of those people?

I believe in a world where there are no accidents. It wasn't a mistake or an accident that you picked up this book. Of course, I'm not so gullible as to think that reading a book is all it takes to transform your life. But I do believe it can be what starts the process, or what takes the process to the next level. I've seen it countless times before, in my own life and in the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of other people, many of whom I've worked with as their life purpose coach.

I invite you for the next several days, weeks, months or years, to step upon the Purposeful Path with me and to explore a new, different and exciting perspective of what a life purpose is -- a perspective that will serve as the door into a new world -- a world where all people are crystal clear of their life purpose and are living true to it throughout their life.

Help Create a World On Purpose

You can help create a world on purpose, and in the process help a lot of other people who are living lives that are less than satisfying and fulfilling. Stop and consider for a moment – how many people do you know that lack focus in their lives, or are working at jobs that do not nurture their soul? How many other people do you know who are adrift in their life, simply getting up in the morning, going to work, returning home to a night of ‘reality TV’, going to bed just to do it all over again the next day?

Why not take just a moment or two to send them a copy of this free ebook excerpt along with a personal note? Together, we can make a difference in those statistics of the last chapter, and we’ll do it one person at a time by caring enough to stop and offer a helping hand. And you can start with this book.

Thanks in advance for caring.

PS If you prefer, you can refer people to the Life On Purpose Institute web site at <http://www.lifeonpurpose.com>. A copy of this ebook can be found at http://www.lifeonpurpose.com/webpages/hub.php?etask=page*32

Piñata:

A decorated container filled with candy and toys suspended from a height, intended to be broken by blindfolded children with sticks, and used as part of Christmas and birthday celebrations in certain Latin-American countries or at children's parties.

"The human mind is like a piñata. When it breaks open, there's a lot of surprises inside. Once you get the piñata perspective, you see that losing your mind can be a peak experience."

"Jane Wagner"

from The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the

How to Reap the Most Value from this Book

As a personal coach for over a decade, I've come to realize that one of the ways I can add value to my clients' lives is by helping them to identify the blocks or obstacles that often prevent them from receiving the gift of wisdom that God is constantly offering us. If you're reading this book, I am relating to you as one of my valued clients and I invite you to relate to me as your coach, communicating to you through the pages of this book.

While it's true that tapping into our inner wisdom is a powerful means of bringing clarity to our lives, there's another resource many people fail to fully tap. We have constructed mental roadblocks that prevent us from clearly hearing the wisdom from other people.

Actually, our inner guidance system plays an important role here as well. When we remove the mental roadblocks, we have a much clearer channel to receive the contributions offered by others. We can then experience what resonates with our inner wisdom, keep what fits, and release the rest. But first we must eliminate the blocks that tend to prevent or distort the flow of wisdom.

I invite you to explore with me some of the common mental roadblocks that can prevent us from getting the most from others whether they are talking to us face-to-face, over the phone or through a book. God talks to us in many ways, including using the voice of others, if only we will listen.

Let's look at some of the mental blocks that may be preventing clear reception.

Monkey Mind

The mind creates 50,000 thoughts a day! The trick is not to become attached to any of them. These thoughts are simply the by-product of the brain's metabolism, nothing to take too seriously.

The term "monkey mind" is a poetic way of describing your mind's constant chatter. The monkey mind refers to the little voice in your mind that comments on nearly everything you do or experience. It is that stream of consciousness that keeps flitting from one thing to another like a monkey jumping from branch to branch. Even when you are concentrating, your mind drifts off to fantasies about something you are going to do next weekend or an unresolved problem you must face tomorrow.

This chattering voice not only distracts you in most situations, it also uses valuable brainpower. In today's times, modern technology, such as the television, radio and the Internet can reinforce this constant chatter. We're constantly bombarded with input. The monkey mind becomes even more of a block when we allow our actions to flow from the ramblings of the monkey mind. How many of us have been on a phone call with another, or perhaps in a teleclass, when suddenly the monkey mind thinks, "I wonder what emails I've received?" If we're not careful, before we know it, we're reading our email messages while supposedly listening to the phone call.

When our mind is chattering away, it can make it nearly impossible to fully hear what another person is saying, especially the subtle messages coming from God. How can we make sure these messages don't get lost in the noise? Well, for starters, just recognizing that we all have a monkey mind can help. By bringing it into our awareness, we can begin to tame the wild monkey. For instance, as soon as you notice you're listening to your monkey mind rather than the person you're talking with, you can stop

and bring yourself back to the conversation. You may even want to ask the person to back up and repeat what they were saying before the monkey mind took over.

Taking time once or twice a day to quiet the mind can also prove very helpful in the long run. Meditation, reflection or prayer can quiet the restless nature of your mind. Periodically dumping all the thoughts you've been trying to hold onto can free you from the monkey mind.

As productivity guru, David Allen, points out in his book *Getting Things Done*, our ability to be productive, (which includes hearing the voice of God coming from others), is directly proportional to our ability to relax. Only when our minds are clear and our thoughts are organized can we achieve a new level of stress-free productivity. Most of us try to hold way too much in our memories.

So, try dumping out all those thoughts onto a pad of paper. Write down all the appointments you've been trying to remember, the projects and next actions you need to take. Watch the monkey mind as it relaxes. Then listen. God has a message for you.

The Full Cup Syndrome

Our second mental block is commonly called the Full Cup Syndrome. It's best describe by the following story:

It appears a young seeker of wisdom traveled to the remote reaches of the world to learn enlightenment from the master. But before the master would even consider teaching him, he invited the young man to participate in the tea ceremony.

So, they retired to the tea garden where the master began the much-venerated tea ceremony, preparing the water mindfully, adding the tea leaves just so, etc. The master began pouring the tea into the young seeker's cup, talking politely as he did so. As the cup began to fill, the student-to-be grew nervous, yet the master continued to pour. The cup filled to the brim, and then the tea began to pour over the rim.

"Master, master," cried the young man. "You are over filling my cup."

Finally, with a smile, the Zen master stopped pouring the tea. "Yes, and you are like the cup; so full there is no room for enlightenment."

Listening as though you already know everything that is being said is the listening of an already full cup, and it gets in the way of the contribution others have for us. While it may sound amazing, I've found this to be true even in coaching relationships. Imagine paying someone to coach you in your life, and then mentally coming to the coaching session so full that there's no room for any new insights. It happens. Whenever we come to a relationship as a full cup, there's very little opportunity of learning anything new or gaining new insights that will make a difference.

Interestingly enough, awareness goes a long way in eliminating this mental roadblock. Once we notice that we're listening as though we already know everything, we can catch it, and let go of it. We can then begin to relate to the person who's trying to contribute to us in a different way. We'll explore some of these other ways later in this series.

Bias

Let's face it - we are all biased about something. We all have unexamined notions, assumptions and beliefs, some which often masquerade as truth. And it is these biases that can act as large boulders that obstruct us from getting the most out of life.

We bring our biases with us to any new relationship. We often don't notice we're doing this, mainly because we do it so often that our bias is simply part of the "background noise" of our lives. If we're not mindful, our unexamined notions, assumptions and beliefs that make up our biases will effectively prevent us from evolving and growing from our interactions with others.

In other words, anything that doesn't fit in our normal paradigm or worldview will be discounted, ignored, glossed over or rejected. An important part of coaching is revealing these previously unexamined notions, assumptions and beliefs, particularly the ones that are viewed as simply the way life is.

But how can we detect these boulders of bias when they threaten to knock us off course? For starters, begin to notice how you react or respond when in conversation with someone else. Often, when we hear a different viewpoint or opinion that doesn't match our own, we react, sometimes quite strongly. When we're operating from our bias, we often listen to see if we agree or disagree with what the person is saying. And the more strongly we disagree, the more sacred the "truth" is that's being called into question.

I'm not suggesting that you should simply accept everything anyone says as true, either. That would be erring at the other end of the spectrum. The starting point once again is awareness. Begin by noticing your reaction when talking to another person. Do you tend to listen to see if you agree or disagree with what the other person is saying? If so, that's a good indication that a bias may be interfering with your ability to fully hear what's being said.

For each of these mental blocks -- monkey mind, the full cup syndrome and bias -- the key to releasing the block is awareness

When we become aware that these mental blocks exist in all of us, then we can begin to be responsible for them. This makes it possible to set them aside and to design new ways of thinking that will enhance the value we can receive from others.

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us."

*"Marianne Williamson"
A Return To Love (1995)*

The Top 10 Benefits to Knowing & Living Your Purpose

Now, let's look more specifically at some of the top benefits others have reported receiving from becoming clear about their purpose and living a life on purpose. These are some of the top benefits you may want to receive for yourself. It will be helpful if you pick at least 3 or 4 benefits that you'd most want to gain from going through the Life On Purpose Process. If you review your personal list each week you are likely to be surprised how the benefits begin to magically appear. Actually, it 's not magic at all. It's a clear example of the power of intention, attention and the Universal Law of Attraction, which simply stated is, "Like attracts like." This is especially true regarding our thoughts. So, if you keep your thoughts and intention on these benefits you will naturally begin to attract the benefits to you.

What happens when you become clear about your purpose and begin to live true to it?

Benefit #1 - Focus

When you clearly know your life purpose, it becomes a truing mechanism allowing you to focus more clearly on what matters most to you. Many people report that this has been one of the most valuable benefits of going through the Purpose Process™. They begin to use their life purpose to make their decisions and choices about where and how they are going to invest their time, energy, money and talents.

The other side of this coin is that often a life off purpose is unfocused and scattered, much like a boat without a rudder. When you don't know your true purpose in life, your life tends to be thrown all over the place by the currents of circumstances.

Benefit #2 - Passion

For many people clarifying their life purpose becomes the key to unlocking their passion for life. Their passion then becomes the fuel that propels them forward. They act in extraordinary ways, surpassing anything they would have considered without the spark of their purpose.

A life off purpose is often devoid of any real passion. The experience can be a little bit like the movie Pleasantville. At the start of the movie, everyone in Pleasantville was living a dull, black and white life, but over time they began to tap into their passion and learned that life could be a beautiful multi-colored experience, filled with passionate moments.

Benefit #3 - Unstoppable

People living on purpose become unstoppable, particularly the longer they live true to their purpose and the more they allow their purpose to shape their life. Yet, at the same time, purposeful people aren't attached to their position. They have learned that it's not necessary to go through life like a bull, ramming through anything that tries to get in their way. They've found that a little patience, coupled with persistence, and surrendering to the timeline of a Higher Power can go a long way.

People without clarity of purpose often find themselves stopped or stuck in life. They often haven't tapped into their passion so they're like a high powered automobile without any fuel in their tank.

Benefit #4 - Fulfillment

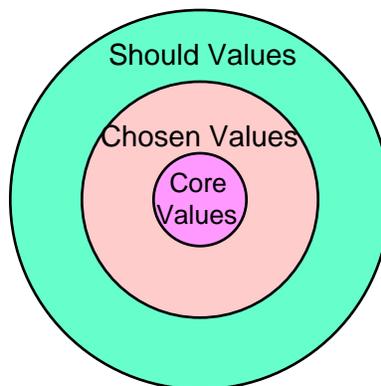
Living a life in which you are regularly expressing your life purpose and allowing it to shape your decisions, your thoughts, feelings and actions is simply a whole lot more fulfilling. A life on purpose is filled with meaning, and people on purpose realize they are making a difference in the world simply by being in the world. Whatever they choose to do in the world to express their life purpose is like icing on the cake.

People living off purpose often have a life filled with meaning as well. Unfortunately, the meaning that they have ascribed to life stems from fear and preoccupies them with the need to struggle and suffer. It helps to remember that although pain may be inevitable, suffering is optional. Knowing your purpose is the key to making this important shift.

Benefit #5 - Value-based living

You will learn as you delve more deeply into the Purpose Process™ that an integral component of a person's life purpose is their "core values" -- those intangibles of life that mean the most to them. Our core values are at the heart of all the values we've been taught we "should" value. Think of it like three concentric circles. The largest circle is composed of our "should" values; the next circle inside that one is our "chosen" value -- the "should" values that we actually choose to hold onto and live from. The last circle is our "core" values, -- those chosen values that truly matter most to us. Since these core values are an integral part of our life purpose, when you are living a life on purpose, you are living a "value-based" life, rather than a "lifestyle" based life.

People living off purpose are often focused on living more from the outer circle of their "should" values, what often is described as "keeping up with the Jones." In a lifestyle-based life, the focus is on life looking a certain way -- the way we were taught our life was supposed to look. The focus is often more on stuff and doing what's expected of us, not what gives us the most joy.



Benefit #6 - Fun

Let's face it - living on purpose is simply a lot more fun than living a life based in fear and obligations. People who know their life purpose and are living it have a renewed zest for life. They can bring purposeful play to almost any situation and find or create ways to have each day be a reflection of their true joy and purpose.

Recently, I took time off from my normal work routine to take in an afternoon matinee. The movie I saw was "The Legend of Bagger Vance." While I thoroughly enjoyed playing hooky from work and the movie in general, there was one line that stood out above all the rest. As I heard the line, I realized it was the main lesson I was there to learn that day. The caddie, Bagger Vance, said, "God is happiest when his children are at play." I keep that line on my desk lamp so I won't forget. Whenever I'm feeling like my work is drudgery, or there's effort involved, I know in those moments I've shifted from expressing my life purpose to something else. Usually the something else is related to some "should" values acquired in the past. We'll learn more about how the past can shape our lives in a later chapter.

People who live off purpose lives have bought into the idea of "No pain, no gain." It doesn't have to be that way. Sure, there may be times when you need to exert yourself more diligently, but that doesn't mean you need to suffer while doing it. I lift weights 3 times a week as part of my health and fitness routine. Part of the object to lifting increasing amounts of weight is to fatigue the muscles so they will grow and become stronger. This doesn't mean that I need to be suffering while I'm straining. I have the choice to sweat with enjoyment or to sweat while complaining about how hard it is, or how unfair it is that I have to be stuck in my gym. I choose to bring joy and fun to my life and so can you.

Benefit #7 - Integrity

For me, a life on purpose is a life of ultimate integrity. It's a life that is whole and complete. People who know their purpose and are living it know who they are and why they are here. They live true to their core values as they serve themselves and others through the expression of their life purpose.

People who are living off purpose simply haven't found themselves yet. There's nothing wrong with them, there's simply something missing. I created the Purpose Process™ to provide people with a means of putting this important missing ingredient into their lives.

Benefit #8 - Trust and Faith

As people clarify their life purpose and begin to live true to it, many of them report a surprising increase in synchronicities and serendipity in their lives. It's as though the Universe is rewarding them for the courage to live true to their purpose. There is also a deepening trust and faith for most of these people. They realize that indeed there is a greater force in the Universe than themselves, while at the same time realizing they are an integral part of that force as well.

People living off purpose, are often slow to trust anything they can't see and touch. Coming from fear, trusting looks like a bad idea. They often have plenty of evidence for not trusting in all of the times they did and were hurt. That's why it takes real courage to live on purpose.

Nowhere in this book will you hear me say that a life on purpose is risk free. But I will say from my own experience and from the experience of the thousands of people I've met living on purpose, the risk is well worth it.

Benefit #9 - Grace

According to the dictionary, grace is "the unmerited divine assistance given man." People living on purpose often report living a grace-filled life. When you commit to living true to your purpose, something amazing begins to happen. The Universe lines up with your intention and commitment. Perhaps this quote says it best:

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creativity there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: That the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too.

All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising ones favor all manner of assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:

'Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it; boldness has genius, power and magic in it.'

W. H. Murray

Benefit #10 - Flow

And perhaps we can summarize the other 9 benefits under this last one. People living on purpose live in the flow of the Universal stream of consciousness. Rather than fighting against the current, they allow the current of what wants to happen to happen. They allow what wants to flow to flow. They know that while they may never completely understand or comprehend God's divine design and plan for this Universe, they can still play an integral part in its realization.

A Word About the Value of Personal Coaching

While I've approached this book with my 'coaching cap' on and have made every effort to give you an experience of being in a coaching relationship with me, I feel I must point out that experiencing the Life On Purpose Process will be greatly heightened if you work with a personal coach who has been trained to guide people along the purposeful path.

Your own personal coach can provide several valuable benefits including:

- **A Structure of Support.** It's easy to stumble off the purposeful path when you're reading a book. With our busy lives, sometimes the sincerest of good intentions become way laid by life's circumstances. Having the structure of a regular coaching session can make a huge difference in staying true and on course with your commitment to clarify and live true to your purpose.
- **Further Clarity.** A personal coach can act like a mirror, reflecting back your thoughts and perspectives, thus bringing more clarity to what you're working on. And with that clarity comes a greater power to create your life.
- **Focus.** Closely akin to clarity is focus. Your coach can help you stay focused on what's most important in your life. During the process a coach can help you stay on course or return to the purposeful path if you do stray.
- **Mastermind Alliance.** Your personal coach can also serve as a mastermind alliance, helping you tap into your own inner wisdom. In other words, when two or more gather together with an commonly shared intention, there is a synergistic energy created such that the sum is greater than the parts.
- **A Full Partner in Life.** A personal coach often becomes a full partner in your life, committed to what you're committed to while remaining unattached.

Of course, no one "needs" a coach and whether or not to work with a coach is a personal decision. At the same time, thousands of people are discovering that it makes a lot of sense to have a coach in their corner, especially if they are committed to excelling at life. If you feel you would benefit from having your own personal Life On Purpose Certified Coach to assist you along the purposeful path, go to the Coach Selector area of the Life on Purpose Institute website at:

<http://lifeonpurpose.com/index.php?task=view-coaches&dir=coaches>

There, you will find bios and profiles of coaches who have been specially trained to guide people through the Life On Purpose Process. Pick the coach that resonates with you and request a complimentary coaching session to see if working with a coach would support you.

"The Michael Jordans of the world all have coaches, the sandlot players don't."

☞ Don Maruska ☞

Preparing for the Journey Along the Purposeful Path

Before heading out on any journey, it's always a good idea to know two things -- where you're starting from and where you want to end up.

It is important to determine where you presently are in your life so you'll have a clearer sense of where the Purposeful Path may lead. You'll do this using 2 purpose tools -- the Living On Purpose Self Test and the Life on Purpose Scale. The Living On Purpose Self Test will help you determine how on or off purpose your life is presently. With the Life On Purpose Scale, you'll be able to gauge how clear or unclear you are about your life purpose.

AWARENESS ALERT!

There may be a tendency to pass judgment on yourself as you evaluate where you presently are in your life. Remember, there's no right or wrong place to be. You simply are where you are. So, as you use these two purpose tools, just be honest and authentic with yourself without passing judgment.

"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one, being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap, the being a force of nature instead of a feverish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

Exercise: Living On Purpose SelfTest

The following exercise, which is known as the Life On Purpose Self Test, will help you determine where you are today along the Purposeful Pathway.

Why is this important? Think of it this way. Have you ever gone into a large shopping mall and needed to find a new store but you didn't know where in the mall it was located? What did you do? Perhaps you wandered around for quite some time trying to find the shop. Or maybe you asked someone else in the mall. Or perhaps you went to one of the Mall Maps usually located at each entrance.

If you chose this last option, you would have found on that map an X, with a note "You are Here," or something to that effect. Map designers know that it's easier to find where you want to go if you start by knowing where you are. And that's what you'll be doing with this fun and engaging SelfTest.

Instructions

NOTE: If you prefer, you may also take the SelfTest online at: <http://lifeonpurpose.com/index.php?page=24> and have the test automatically scored.

Step One

Circle the number that represents your answer. Use '5' as neutral. Anything below 5 isn't working or lacks clarity; above 5 is working above average or is clear.

1. I am crystal clear what my life purpose is.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

2. The life I lead is a full expression of my life purpose. (Of course, you need to know your purpose to have your life be an expression of it.)

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

3. My life purpose is designed to nurture those and myself around me.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

4. My life purpose gives me plenty of room to fully express myself.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

5. I am fully known and related to as my life purpose by others around me.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

6. I recognize the contribution I make to others by expressing my life purpose.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

7. I live a values-based life rather than a materialistic-based life.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

8. My life is shaped by my life purpose rather than by what others expect of me or think I should be.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

9. I fully experience and I'm grateful for the simple abundance all around me.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

10. My life is free of unnecessary clutter and complexities and I seldom feel overwhelmed, rushed or cluttered.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

11. I regularly acknowledge the gracious bounty of my life.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

12. I fully realize that many of the best things in life are free and my life reflects this.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

13. I trust that as I live true to my purpose the Universe will provide everything I need for the expression of my purpose.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

14. I regularly take time to nurture myself in ways that feed my soul.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

15. I have plenty of time to devote to my family, friends and community.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

16. I have a rich and satisfying spiritual life.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

17. I have taken time to explore my beliefs to be certain they are of my own choice rather than what others think I should believe.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

18. I've established my home as a sanctuary for the soul and it reflects this.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

19. I feel a deep sense of security and I'm seldom fearful of not having "enough" of anything.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

20. I regularly reach out to assist others on their path to living on purpose.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Agree

Step Two

Now add up your total score and write it down here: _____. Your answer should be somewhere between 20 and 200.

Step Three

The last step is to determine which of the following categories describes where you are right now. Pick the range your score falls into. Before doing so remember -- the point of the exercise is simply to get an idea of where you're starting. There is no right or wrong place to be, any more than there's a right or wrong entrance to be at in the Mall. Be careful not to disempower yourself with unnecessary judgments.

<p>20 - 50 “Adrift”</p>	<p>Your life is like a rudderless boat cast adrift at sea, tossed about by the turbulent currents of circumstance. You might view this Self Test as a wake up call. Life has so much more to offer than you are currently experiencing. Sure, it might feel at this point that you have to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, but this isn’t necessarily the case. Look around. The Universe is waiting to provide you with whatever you need. The trick is to start today; right now in the moment. What one action could you take to live more fully on purpose? Who could you call upon for help and support? What requests could you make that would begin the process of healing and nurturing your soul?</p>
<p>51 - 80 “Surviving”</p>	<p>At this level you’re getting by in your life, although many times it may feel like something is missing. Those feelings could be your soul beginning to awaken to the rich possibilities that lie ahead. Trust those feelings and begin to ask your ‘inner guidance system’ for what’s needed to begin fulfilling your life. To do this, you’ll need time for quiet reflection. Carving out this time in your life will be richly rewarding, especially if you then follow the suggestions that arise from these moments.</p>
<p>81 - 110 “Striving”</p>	<p>Your life is moving forward well at this level and you have much to be thankful for, although you may not be as fully aware of these blessings. So, at this level a little ‘gratitude work’ can go a long way in moving you to the next level. Two ideal times to consciously practice gratitude are in the morning as you first awaken and at night as you prepare for sleep. If you haven’t already done so, consider starting a gratitude journal or simply devote 5 to 10 minutes in the morning and evening ‘counting your blessings.’ It’ll be time well spent.</p>
<p>111 - 140 “Competency”</p>	<p>Congratulations! You’ve been doing good work in your life and it shows. You’re living a life that works, that has integrity and you’re reaping the bounty of such a life. People and opportunities are beginning to be naturally attracted to you. It’s now time to take on a renewed sense of responsibility in your life. You are a light, a beacon for what’s possible. In owning this, you move forward in your life as well as being an inspiration for others. To go to the next level, let your light shine. Share your gifts, your blessings and your truest nature with others, not boastfully but authentically.</p>
<p>141 - 170 “Flourishing”</p>	<p>Cherish your life. You have created it as a sanctuary for your soul as well as for those around you. Your life is like a tranquil harbor where others can come to rest and receive support. At the same time you know your true self well enough to speak the truth in a way that contributes to others. Going to the next level involves Trust -trusting yourself, your inner guidance, and the Universe.</p>
<p>171 - 200 “Mastery”</p>	<p>One of the signs of being a master is knowing that one is never fully a master of anything. However, at this level you are comfortable with such a paradox. Now, what there is to do is to give away all that you have learned, knowing that you can never out-give the Universe, for the more you give, the more the Universe provides.</p>

Step Four

As you continue to travel along the purposeful pathway, monitor your progress by repeating the SelfTest about every 3 months. This will give you the opportunity to notice the progress you're making as well as to distinguish areas in which to focus more attention.

Taking a Closer Look at the Self Test

Let's spend a few minutes taking a closer look at the SelfTest statements so you can begin to see how each of them fit together with a life on purpose.

1. I am crystal clear what my life purpose is.

The truth is, most people aren't clear what their life purpose is, even though they think they are. In fact, according to the popular book *Cool Careers for Dummies*, "46 percent of men and 40 percent of women say they are still trying to figure out the meaning and purpose of their life."

When William Marsten, a prominent psychologist, asked 3,000 people, "What have you to live for?" 94 percent responded by saying they had no definite purpose for their lives -- 94 percent!

That's a lot of people unclear about their life purpose. Why is it so important to be clear about your purpose? Try this on.

Think of your life purpose like a source of light. If you are clueless about your life purpose, the light is off and pretty much all you see is darkness. If you have a vague idea what your life purpose is, then the light is like a tabletop lamp. It may be warm and comforting but it still lacks power. However, a crystal clear and focused life purpose is like the light of a laser beam, able to cut through the circumstances that often stop other people from living a satisfying and fulfilling life.

One of the first steps to becoming crystal clear about your life purpose is to determine how clear or unclear you are. (See the Life On Purpose Scale below.)

2. The life I lead is a full expression of my life purpose. (Of course, you need to know your purpose to have your life be an expression of it.)

If you aren't clear about your life purpose, then, of course, you'd score low on this next statement. But, being clear about your life purpose is really just the first leg along the purposeful path. The real journey begins when you begin to live and express your life purpose. That's why I consider the second stage of the Life On Purpose Process to be "where the rubber meets the road." Otherwise the statement of your life purpose devolves into a 'purpose platitude' with little if any influence on your day-to-day life.

Interestingly enough, you can begin today to start living true to your life purpose, even as you also continue to clarify what it is. We'll begin this process in the Creating the Gap exercise.

3. My life purpose is designed to nurture me and those around me.

I know this may sound strange, but some of the life purpose statements people create are steeped in guilt, a sense of obligation or even fear. They may feel that they were sent here to do something that

only they can do, and so, if they're not doing it or being successful at it, then they feel guilty. This combo of obligation and guilt can be a real downer.

A few years ago I worked with a client -- I'll call him Ed. When I asked him what his view of a life purpose was and what he felt his own life purpose was, he replied, "I think a life purpose is something that you were put on earth to do that only you can accomplish."

Ed went on to explain that several years before he had met a woman who he felt had some extraordinary insights into the spiritual realm. He and his wife had continued to meet in a group of others to listen to and discourse with this spiritual sage. Ed had received permission to record many of these meetings, with the intention of one day making the contents of those tapes available to the world. He was the only person with this material at this point, he said, and he felt spreading the spiritual message of this sage was his life purpose. Unfortunately, he'd yet to do anything with the tapes, and so felt an incredible amount of guilt and remorse about not fulfilling his life purpose.

But I don't believe that a life of guilt and remorse is what God has intended for any of us. If the thought of your life purpose leaves you with these kinds of feelings, there are at least two different things that could be causing those feelings.

First, you may have misidentified your life purpose as something you should be doing, rather than something you're inspired to do. As you will discover in the Life On Purpose Process, your life purpose isn't ever about what you do, but is instead more about who you are. Your life purpose is never based in "should's." Should's come from past-based conditioning and they are not the source of your true life purpose.

The other thing that may occur that leads to feelings of guilt or remorse is that you have identified some aspect of your life purpose or some action that is an expression of your life purpose, but you then fail to move forward. The only thing worse than never waking up to your life purpose is waking up to it and then not taking action to live true to it.

So, check in to see if you're experiencing any guilt or remorse about your life purpose. If so, ask yourself, "What are these emotions trying to tell me about my life?" Take some time to check in with your inner spirit to see what it has to say about it. Then, follow its guidance.

Remember, your life purpose is meant to nourish and nurture you and others. If what you have identified a life purpose that isn't nourishing you at this point, I'd be suspicious. It is either no longer your purpose in life, if it ever was, or it is a part of your life purpose that you've not been willing to act upon.

4. My life purpose gives me plenty of room to fully express myself.

While this may at first sound like a repeat of SelfTest statement #2, there's a subtle yet important difference. Statement #2 - *The life I lead is a full expression of my life purpose* - is about whether or not you're living your life purpose. Statement #4 points to another quality of a life purpose. A life purpose is focused and clear and at the same time isn't constraining or limiting to the Self or soul. We'll talk more about the qualities to expect in a true life purpose in a later chapter.

5. I am fully known and related to as my life purpose by others around me.

This statement points to the ‘relational’ aspect of being a human being. The more people who know you and relate to you as your life purpose, the more freely you can express it in the world. Thus, the longer you live true to your life purpose, the easier it gets, especially if you’re sharing who you are with the people in your life.

Said another way, your life purpose doesn’t just live inside you. If it does, it has a very real chance of being stifled out of existence. For your life purpose to flourish it needs room to breath in the consciousness of other people.

The more people who know what your life purpose is and who relate to you, at least in part, as that life purpose, the more room you have to play and express yourself consistent with your life purpose.

So, as you journey along the Purposeful Path, be sure you’re sharing yourself with others. Besides, just like other journeys, it’s always fun to have other people along for the ride.

6. I recognize the contribution I make to others by expressing my life purpose.

Your life purpose in action is contribution. Inherent in what it is to be a human being is a deep-seated desire to make a difference with other human beings. We long to contribute, to be of service, and when we’re living true to our life purpose, being of service is a natural by-product. Another way to say this is that your life purpose isn’t just about you -- it includes you and others as well.

As you become clear about what your purpose in life is, you will discover new and inventive ways to express that purpose in all areas of your life. No longer do you have to think about your life purpose as only your job, career or profession. Nor do you have to limit it to the roles you play in life, such as being the best parent you can be, a loving sibling, or good employee.

It really is possible to be your life purpose in all areas of your life, to literally live true to your life purpose 100% of the time. Now, that may be farther down the Purposeful Path for some people, but that’s OK because the journey to that destination is fun and exciting.

As you travel along the Purposeful Path and become clearer about your life purpose, stop from time to time to ponder: “How, where and with whom you would enjoy contributing to others?” Often this step will help lead you to clarifying your life purpose. Why? Because the contributions we make are like ‘breadcrumbs of passion,’ bits of information and feelings that lead us to our true purpose and calling.

7. I live a value-based life rather than a materialistic-based life.

In today’s times, this can be a difficult statement to confront. Our Western culture is so heavily steeped in materialism it’s difficult to not get caught up in it. We’re assaulted every day with hundreds, if not thousands of invitations to buy more, more, more. It’s easy to get confused and think that our life purpose is about having more rather than about being.

I’m not saying there’s anything wrong with “stuff”, or a desire to have material possessions. Part of my own life purpose is living a life of “mindful abundance and simplicity.” I stand for and believe that we all live in a bountiful and abundant universe, and that God provides us with all the resources we need to live and express our true purpose. We run into a problem and risk getting bumped off the Purposeful Path

when we base our lives on our desire for stuff rather than on our true values -- those intangibles that motivate us to serve and live true to our purpose.

Begin this week to get in touch with your true, core values. What really does matter most to you in life? What would you really desire to have more of in your life? What could there be more of to make the world a better place in which to live?

Then ask yourself, "Where is my life being shaped by my values and where is it being shaped by my need for more stuff?" How might your life change if you used your values as the truing mechanism to keep you on track? What actions could you take this week to start aligning your life to your values?

8. My life is shaped by my life purpose rather than by what others expect of me or think I should be.

We'll learn as we travel further along the Purposeful Path that obligations and the expectations of others are two powerful influences that can keep us stuck in the rut of living a life off purpose.

This is particularly true when we aren't clear who we are and why we're here, when we don't know what we stand for in life. As the old saying goes, "If you don't know what you stand for, you'll fall for anything." When we begin to examine our life more closely we'll find places where our life is being shaped by the expectations of people who aren't even a part of our life anymore. This may include deceased parents, divorced spouses, former employers, and long lost friends.

I've been an orphan for a number of years now. My dad died when I was 6 and my mother passed on over 5 years ago. While I love them both, I realize that I'm unwilling to have their expectations of me continue to shape my life. And the truth is, I don't think they really expect anything of me at this point.

Once we distinguish that we've been giving our power to other people, we can begin to reassess the situation. Perhaps it's time to take some, if not all, of that power back.

Where have you given away your power and choices to design your own life to the expectations of others, living or dead? What action could you take this week to reclaim some of that lost power?

9. I fully experience and am grateful for the simple abundance all around me.

Ahh, such a powerful phrase -- "simple abundance." Can we ever fully experience the joy that can be found in such abundance all around us? I think not. I don't believe there's any ceiling on experiencing this joy, and I also feel that many of us aren't even close to what we could be experiencing. Again, it's so easy to get caught up in our cultural obsessions of doing and having. We often miss the joy of just being - being in nature, being with ourselves, being with our loved ones.

When was the last time you took the time to just pause and listen to the birds in the early morning hours just as the sun begins to rise? Or to study the fresh green leaves as they first start to emerge in the spring? Or, took the time to tiptoe into your children's bedroom at night and watch them sleep?

As I was writing this, I looked up for a moment from my work. Outside in the trees near my bird feeder I saw a pair of Cardinals and a redheaded woodpecker flitting from branch to branch. A chickadee joined them. In your life, do you take the time to experience such simple abundance throughout your day?

Where could you take the time, even 10 to 15 minutes, 2 to 3 times during your day to appreciate the simple abundance all around you?

The chapter on the Self Test continues in the full text edition of *Traveling the Purposeful Path* available online at <http://lifeonpurpose.com/index.php?page=32>

"It isn't the burdens of today that drives people mad. It is the regrets over yesterday and the fear of tomorrow. Regret and fear are twin thieves who rob us. So, stop pacing the aisles and counting the miles. Instead climb more mountains, eat more ice cream, go barefoot more often, swim more rivers, watch more sunsets, laugh more, cry less. Life must be lived as we go along."

Starting with the Basics: What is a Life Purpose, Anyway?

Let's start with this basic question: *What is a life purpose?*

I'm not asking what your personal purpose is, not yet. In fact, I'd like for us to look beyond just your own perspective to see if we can identify what most people's view of a life purpose is. What would you say the 'cultural perspective' would be?

One way to think of this would be to imagine that you've decided to conduct a survey to find the answer to this question. So you go out on a street corner where you live and you interview a couple hundred people. What do you feel the most common answer would be to the question, "What is a life purpose?" What might the central theme be to the responses you receive?

The most common response may be similar to what your personal response would be, or it may be different. What we're really trying to get at with this survey is not just what people say a life purpose is but how they relate to the concept. In other words, look not just at what people say, but what their collective actions say. This is important because we often talk about something conceptually but it may not be reflected in the actions we take.

Write down one or more responses of how you feel people would response to the concept of a life purpose.

Since founding Life On Purpose Institute in 1996, I've had the opportunity to ask this question of not just a couple hundred people but thousands. Here is the central theme that runs throughout the vast majority of those responses.

"A life purpose is what I'm meant to **do** while I'm here on earth. "

The key word is "do." Most of us believe that our life purpose is all about what we're here to do. We may say this in various ways -- it's what we're here to accomplish, it's something that only we're able to do, it's something we're to do that gives us joy, etc.

Since we're talking about people's perception of something, of course, this perception is as valid as any other. And as with any perception it results in a certain way we live our life. What I'm going to suggest next may stretch you a bit so be ready to simply try this next idea on and let's explore it together.

I'm suggesting that when we think of a life purpose as something we do it heads us in a particular direction right out of the starting gate. It's as if we jump into life and see a sign that says, "This way to your life purpose" and the sign points in the direction of "doing." So when we get to the next question, "What is my life purpose," we're already heading down the path that's all about doing.

As a result, most of us have a life filled with a lot of doing, and for many of us, a lot of having which is a natural by-product of all the doing. But we may be missing something, like the true sense of satisfaction and fulfillment that we really want. It's as if we've taken a detour without realizing it. We wonder how we ended up where we are until we realize that the road sign pointing to "doing" led us where we are.

So, I'm going to suggest that if we're interested in clarifying our true purpose in life so that we can have a life that is fulfilling and satisfying, we need to operate from a new perspective of what a life purpose is. This way when we head out into life we'll be able to travel down a different path -- a purposeful path that leads to a life of joy, satisfaction and fulfillment.

Here's a different perspective I'd like for you to try on.

Consider that a life purpose is the context, vessel or container into which you pour your life. Sit with that for a moment before reading on, and then we'll look at this perspective more deeply.

Let's use a visual aid to examine this perspective in more depth. Imagine you have your favorite coffee mug in front of you. It's about two-thirds filled with water. The mug represents the life purpose, the context vessel or container for your life.



If the mug as a container represents your life purpose, what does the water represent? Your life, right?

Now, let's focus on just the mug and water for a moment. You may find it helpful to actually have a mug filled with water in front of you. If you look at the mug and the water, you can notice that there is a relationship that exists between them. What can you observe about this relationship?

If you're not sure where we're going with this, think of it this way. What happened to the water when you first poured it into the cup? The water took on the form of the inside of the mug, or said a different way, the mug gave shape and form to the water.

Quick Review

In our comparison, what does the cup represent and what does the liquid represent? Choose a, b, or c below.

- a. The cup represents how far you can travel, and the water represents the direction.
- b. The cup represents one's life purpose and the liquid represents one's life.
- c. The cup represents a vessel and the liquid represents what's inside it.

The cup represents one's life purpose and the water represents one's life, so b is correct. In this example, the cup is the context that shapes one's life -- the life purpose. The water is what is being shaped by the life purpose -- your life.

In case you feel like you're about to have a brain strain, pause for a moment. Take a deep breath and let it out. Now one more. Good. We're going to look a little closer at the notion of a life purpose being the context for one's life.

Remember that part of the reason we're looking at this perspective in such depth is because we have an old 'cultural perspective' to transcend.

Here are the next questions to consider. When we talk about our life being shaped by our life purpose, what do we really mean? What makes up a person's life?

To get to the answer, let's go back to our comparison of the mug and water. We said the water represents our life. Think back to your ninth grade science class - the simplest unit of water that retains the property of water is a molecule.

If you went any smaller, you'd have atoms, 2 atoms of hydrogen and 1 atom of oxygen but those individual atoms by themselves don't have the properties of water. It takes a molecule composed of 2 hydrogen atoms and 1 oxygen atom to give us the properties of water. But what does this have to do with a life purpose? Well, here's the really big question that will begin to get us back to what a life purpose is: What's the comparable simplest unit of a person's life?

What we're looking for is the simplest or most basic unit of a person's life that will retain the properties of the life. The reason we want to know this is that we'll then know what's truly being shaped when we say our life is being shaped by our life purpose. When we multiply this "molecule of life" enough times, we will have a person's full life.

Here's a hint. Just like a molecule of water has 3 components, the simplest unit of a person's life has three components as well.

"I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he had imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."

Exercise – The Three Basic Components of Life

As we go through this exercise, we'll identify each of these three basic components.

The part of a person's life we're interested in is that portion that begins at the moment of conception (or birth, whichever you prefer) and ends at the moment of death. Now, I realize it can be argued that there's 'stuff' before birth and after death, but for this discussion, we're only interested in the part between birth and death.

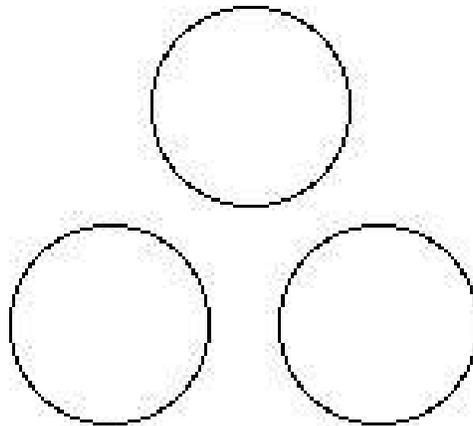
Conception/Birth <=====Life===== Death

Ok, let's use your life in this next part. Imagine, someone decides to make a movie of your entire life, starting with your birth or conception and ending with your death when the credits start rolling. Think of it as a sequel to the movie "The Truman Show," the film in which the main character unknowingly lived his whole life in front of television cameras. This is your movie, not Truman's.

Now, a movie is made up of a whole bunch of individual frames, right? What does **one of those frames** represent in the movie of your life? That is one of the basic components we're looking for that makes up a molecule of life. Choose a, b or c below. The frame represents:

- a. a day in your life
- b. a minute in your life
- c. a moment in time of your life

A moment in time of your life is really as accurate as we can get it. And if you look, isn't your life a composition of moments in time? This moment, the next, the next, the next, and so on. One of the basic components that make up a molecule of life is 'moments in time,' so write that in one of the following circles.



Molecule of Life

Now, to reveal the other two basic components, let's go back to the movie analogy and look at any frame of your movie. In fact, if you looked at each and every frame of the movie of your life, there'd be one thing that you'd consistently see in each frame. What would it be?

Hint. This one is similar to the question, who is buried in Grant's Tomb? Be careful you don't make it more difficult than it is.

Doesn't it make sense that the one thing you'd see in each and every frame of the movie of your life would be YOU? In other words, the second basic component of a molecule of a person's life is the person -- a living, conscious human being. So, write YOU, or PERSON in one of the other circles. We now have two of the basic components. Let's go back to the movie one last time to reveal the last basic component.

This time we'll look at a strip of the film from any part of the movie. We could take a strip from the first day your were born, from the first time you went to grade school, from any part of the movie of your life. If we then take that strip and run it through the movie projector and shine it on a movie screen, there'd be something we could observe up on the movie screen, that we could only observe because the strip of film is running through the projector. What is it that you'd observe on the screen?

Take a moment to ponder this before moving on. Give it your best shot.

Hint. If you suddenly flipped the switch on the movie projector to fast forward, you'd be able to observe what we're talking about more easily.

Of course, one thing you'd observe on the movie screen is you, but we've already determined that that is one of the basic components. The last component would be action, motion or you doing something. Think about it for a moment. Aren't we always doing something? Even when we're sitting around "doing nothing", we're doing something. We're sitting around doing nothing.

So, the last basic component that makes up a "molecule of life" is "doingness," or action, so write that in the last circle.

Now, let's review what we've come up with and see what this all has to do with you living on purpose.

First, we've identified that the basic "molecule of life" is a living, conscious person, in moments in time and what that person is doing. This is what is being shaped by the person's life purpose.

You may still wonder, "What does all this have to do with your life purpose?"

Well, you may not have noticed it but we've just made a very important distinction many people fail to make, and in failing to make it, they're left stuck trying to figure out their life purpose.

Let's look at both life purpose perspectives -- the "cultural perspective" and the "Life On Purpose perspective." Remember, what we said the common theme of the cultural perspective is that a life purpose is what we're meant to do while on earth.

The Life On Purpose perspective says something very different. I'm suggesting to you that a life purpose isn't what we do, but instead it's what shapes what we do.

You see, most people are asking themselves the wrong question when it comes to their life purpose. They're asking, "What is it I'm supposed to do with my life?"

But the doing isn't the life purpose. The doing is what is shaped by the life purpose!

Remember, the simplest unit of a life is a live person in a moment in time doing something. It is those "molecules" that are being shaped by the context or vessel of the life purpose. They are not the life purpose itself.

Said another way, your life purpose is the context of your life that shapes the doingness of your life. What we do in life are the ways in which we express our life purpose. They aren't the life purpose itself. The important distinction we've made is:

Life Purpose = Context of your life that shapes what you do

Doing, actions, projects, goals = The ways in which you express your life purpose.

This old joke helps amplify this powerful distinction.

There was once this guy named Joe. One night two of Joe's friends found him down at the street corner on his hands and knees under the street lamp. They asked him what he was doing.

He glanced up at them a moment, then pointing down at a dark alley down the street replied, "I lost my car keys down in the alley so I'm trying to find them."

The two friends glanced at each other for a couple moments before one of them asked, "Well, Joe, if you lost your keys down in the dark alley, why are you looking for them here under the street lamp?"

Going back to his work, Joe answered. "Because the light is a lot better here."

Many people are like Joe. They've spent most of their life looking under the street lamp of "doing" trying to find something that's not there. They really need to be looking somewhere else. But where?

Let's go back to the mug and water analogy. The questions we really need to be asking are these:

What is the mug composed of? What is the makeup of a person's life purpose?

Again, let's start with the mug. A mug may be composed of glass, ceramic, porcelain, steel, wood, Styrofoam, cardboard, and many other materials. And just like a mug can be composed of many different materials, so can a life purpose. As the Life On Purpose Process came to me from my inner guidance and source of creativity, I realized that there were certain qualities that one would want for their life purpose to have. A life purpose needs to:

- be a **powerful shaping force** in our lives. In other words, it would be powerful enough to shape each person as they go through the many moments of their lives doing whatever they were doing.
- be **long lasting and enduring**. Wouldn't you want a life purpose that could last a lifetime or beyond? I sure do.
- be **flexible**. While we want our life purpose to be a powerful shaping force in our lives and to be long lasting and enduring, at the same time it should give us plenty of room to play and to express ourselves fully.

With these three qualities of a life purpose in mind, I asked my inner guidance: “What are the basic elements that, when blended together, would consistently result in a life purpose with these qualities and would do so for any and everyone?” And that’s what we’ll explore in the next section.

What’s Next?

Thank you for taking the time to start your journey along the purposeful path. The fun, focus, and fulfillment that are available along this journey have just begun. Why not continue with your personal roadmap available in your copy of *Traveling the Purposeful Path* available online in either ebook or quality paperback editions. To order your copy go to: <http://lifeonpurpose.com/index.php?page=32>

There are two other resources available online intended to assist you along your journey:

Retain the services of your personal Life On Purpose Certified Coach. Go to: http://lifeonpurpose.com/index.php?task=view-coaches&dir=_coaches Read the profiles of each coach until you find the one that resonates with you. Then, complete the Coaching Questionnaire of the coach you selected for a Complimentary Coaching Session. By the end of the 45-60 minute phone coaching session, you’ll know whether having a Life On Purpose Certified Coach in your corner is a fit for you.

You will also find our Purpose Process TeleSampler ClassesByPhone to be a great way to jumpstart your journey along the purposeful path. To register for this free, 90-minute class conducted on a telephone bridge line, go to: http://lifeonpurpose.com/index.php?task=view-classes&dir=_classes

Questions, comments, just want to talk with someone about clarifying your life purpose? Contact our North Carolina based offices by calling toll free (800) 668-0183, or email us at info@lifeonpurpose.com

About the Author

W. Bradford Swift

*Founder and Director of Life On Purpose Institute
Life Purpose Coach, author, speaker, husband, great dad*

When I introduce myself people listen for titles and accomplishments. My list is long and diverse – small animal veterinarian, published author, Life Purpose coach, speaker, visionary, husband, and dad.

For many years roles and their perks were the sole source of my identity. I studied, I worked hard. I acquired houses and earned prestige. After all, that's what I believed I had to do to be safe, loved and valued.

As I neared my 40th birthday I felt like Alice in Wonderland seeking counsel from the Red Queen: *"...Here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"* Confused and frustrated, I ran faster, treading deeper into depression.

Like many others running the race, I needed a wake up call to break the pattern I had inherited from my family history and society. My second marriage was failing and my veterinary practice was sapping my energy. I divorced, I sold my business. I became a freelance writer and I married a woman who shared my values. Yet my identity was still tied to what I did for a living and how I spent my days.

I cannot precisely pick a point when I recognized the transformative power of living a life on purpose. Many small events led me to that awakening. One I do remember was attending a workshop on prosperity. After a weekend of exploring the spiritual laws of prosperity, I signed up for a weeklong intensive on the subject.

It was there in the mountains of Alabama in 1994 that a notion I had heard many times but never embraced struck home - we all have a divine life purpose and, if we truly want to live a prosperous life, we need to identify what that purpose is.

I returned home renewed and refreshed, and with a clearer sense of purpose. I knew that at least part of my own life purpose was to assist others in clarifying and living true to their purpose.

With this new perspective, I began an experiment. I created Project Purpose and began to focus my writing on people and institutions whose lives and missions are dedicated to a bold and inspired purpose or vision.

As I interviewed dozens of people, I began to notice some common. Each of them expressed their life purpose in service to others. They trusted that all the resources they needed were available to them. At the same time they led simple, even elegant lives. In almost every case, these passionately ordinary people knew that a higher power would support them no matter what hardships they might face.

My work on Project Purpose unveiled three common elements of purposeful living - service, simplicity and spiritual serenity. With these guiding principles, I was able to further clarify my own life purpose and to see a bigger picture. I knew that ALL people could live lives of purposeful, passionate and playful service, mindful abundance balanced with simplicity, and spiritual serenity. And it is to this possibility and purpose that I dedicated my life.

I saw that people whose work was guided by a strong purpose were most effective with the support of a structured organization. While working on a Yoga Journal article published as "Simple Living in a Complex World," I took a risk. The editor asked me to provide readers with other resources for simplifying their lives. At that time the Life On Purpose Foundation, a nonprofit organization I envisioned that would focus on living lives of service, simplicity and spiritual serenity, was only a spark of an idea. But I listed my brainchild in the article. Within weeks calls came in from all over the world. I knew I was on the right track.

Today the Life on Purpose Institute offers people the opportunity to find and nurture their life purpose. One of our most powerful tools is the process of coaching. I'd first been introduced to coaching back in the mid-1980's when, as a veterinarian, I hired what I thought at the time was a business consultant. I fell in love with the power of coaching. Not only did we produce some amazing business results, but under my coach's caring and challenging direction, I transformed my personal life as well.

For me a life on purpose is a life of purposeful, passionate and playful service, mindful abundance balanced with simplicity and spiritual serenity. Using this framework, I have been able to shift from a life of unending and unsatisfying achieving to one of peaceful and purposeful being. I still work hard and dream big. I want to create a world in which all people know and live true to their life purpose. And I am willing to invest the time, energy and spirit required to achieve this goal. But today my work feels like play. I feel guided instead of driven. My work is an expression of who I am and a means of bringing my deepest purpose into reality.

Each morning when I take my morning walk with my dog, Maggie, around the mountain lake near my home, I remind myself that my job, first and foremost, is to live true to my own life purpose. And I know that, as I live true to my purpose, God will continue to provide me with all the resources necessary for the continual expression and fulfillment of my purpose. The fact that you are reading these words is simply more evidence of how true these statements are.

In 1996, Brad Swift formed Life On Purpose Institute, an organization dedicated to people clarifying their life purpose and I specializes in life purp Program, he trains asp of all people living pur balanced with simplici

I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no "brief candle" to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I've got to hold up for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

ent movement, he Coaches Development Institute - The possibility mindful abundance

As a freelance writer B

e assortment of magazines

including *Omni*, *Entrepreneur*, *New Age Journal*, *Yoga Journal*, *Utne Reader*, *Unity Magazine*, *Better Homes and Garden*, and *Modern Maturity*. His first book, *Winning Through Coaching: Building Your Business Through Building Your Team* was published by Veterinary Medicine Publishing Group in 1997. Brad links his coaching and writing passions by coaching aspiring writers to excel. He sponsors the Project Purpose Writing Team, a collaborative writing ensemble committed to writing and publishing

articles about people and institutions whose lives and missions are dedicated to a bold and inspired purpose or vision.

Brad holds a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine, in Athens, GA and an undergraduate degree in pre-veterinary medicine and zoology at North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

Brad and his wife and purpose partner, Ann live at "Paradise Found", their redwood chalet home in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. They share their mountaintop paradise with six-year-old daughter, Amber and their cats, Lera and Pretty Heart, and Maggie McGee, an Australian sheepdog.