

Is your life's purpose for sale?

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By Craig Nathanson

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There is no purpose too big or too small

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Meet Joe. He's a middle-aged bridge toll-taker in the San Francisco Bay Area. In a recent interview, Joe said he loves the role he has filled for the last 12 years. The job suits his purpose. He said: "If I can help someone start their day off right in the few seconds when they are handing me [the toll], I feel I have made a difference in the day and life of another person."

Meet Mel. He's a veteran New York City street sweeper who works through the night clearing away the previous day's debris. Mel ran into Craig Nathanson, The Vocational Coach, one morning after Craig's run in Central Park. Mel said: "Nothing makes me happier than making sure no one has to step on garbage when they start out their day on my street." He has been sweeping the same four square city blocks for 30 years.

Meet Minna Valentine, a.k.a. "The Reading Doctor." A past client of Craig's, she's a former marketing executive who ditched the corporate world to teach English as a second language. This is her take on the changes she made in her vocational path: "Teaching others makes me feel like I am contributing to something worthwhile."

Joe, Mel, and Minna each go to work every day knowing they will make a difference to someone. They are grateful to be able to do so. There are many so-called high achievers earning six-figure salaries that cannot make that claim.

Why is living with purpose critical in mid-life?

In mid-life, many people find themselves suddenly questioning everything - careers, lifestyles, and priorities. Nothing is spared from this examination, although few will discuss their fears.

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Often it takes a personal crisis - a layoff, a death, or a divorce - to move people from introspection to action. When these events occur, they open up a small window of opportunity to challenge everything and consider a new course.

Inner questioning is critical in mid-life. If a person hopes to achieve greater meaning and self-fulfillment, things are never easy. It requires courage and a leap of faith.

Craig speaks from experience. A few years ago, he came home from his six-figure job and announced to his family that he was quitting. He no longer found meaning and fulfillment in what he was doing. That was his first leap of faith.

How do I find and live with purpose?

Finding the "meaning of life" is not self-indulgent or cliché. It is the essence of why we are here. If there is no meaning, then what is the point of existence? In order to create a path toward meaning, in our jobs and in our lives, we need to begin with an evaluation process that challenges.

– Fill in the blank: "The purpose of my life is ..." Keep saying it until you find an answer. Then write it down.

– Make an honest self-assessment of your current state. Exclude external input or validation. Are you driven? A procrastinator? Happy? Sad? Energetic? Lethargic? Generous? Selfish? Adventurous? Conservative? Etc.

– Define the experiences you need now to feel fully alive. Then, develop a plan to have those experiences. Do you want to travel to China before you turn 50? Have you always wanted to sing in front of a large audience? Have you always wanted to study to become a chef? Have you always wanted to run a marathon? Etc.

– Define exactly what you're passionate about and where you want to make a contribution. Is it music? Teaching? Sports? Photography? Cooking? Academics? Etc.

– Define what is most important to you. Then, set short- and long-term goals that are aligned with these priorities. Without a clear path, goals are mere daydreams. Set up a process to monitor your progress.

– Define the new experiences that you must have to add a greater sense of meaning and fulfillment to your life. Do you need to start cooking more? Traveling? Taking classes? Skydiving? Etc.

– Define your beliefs about yourself. Then, change the ones that are no longer useful. Do you believe you are deserving of doing what you love? Or do you believe that work is not meant to be fun and meaningful?

Dr. James Hollis, a scholar on philosopher Carl Jung and a writer on mid-life issues, said that as we grow older, both meaning and purpose become equal. Both are needed to thrive. Also, Jung wrote that

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early in life, meaning is derived through preparation for living. In later years, meaning is derived through an examination of the inner self.

What are the results of living with purpose in mid-life?

Victor Frankl, a Nazi death camp survivor, believed that the urge of human beings to search for meaning is inborn. Researcher Martin Bolt said that having meaning and a defined purpose in a person's life makes it possible to accept one's own mortality with less fear of death and a greater sense of life's plans and their meaning.

Mid-life adults with purpose can experience:

- A greater sense of integrity and authenticity;
 - An experience of being more alive;
 - An increased feeling of contribution;
 - Stronger health and psychological wellbeing;
 - A life that's more congruent;
-
- An acceptance of their own mortality and, as a result, less fear of death and a greater sense of their life plans and their meaning;
 - A feeling of greater control over their lives and a feeling that their life matters;
 - An increased sense of self-esteem and happiness.

Is this enough incentive for you?

You can discover and live a more purposeful life now. Don't simply surrender to a world that will continue to rent your skills to suit its purposes. A greater second half is possible if you take action now!

Remember Mel, Joe, and Minna? What connects them is that neither fits into a conventional definition of success. Yet pursuing conventionally defined success has led so many people on a journey that ends with disappointment and a crisis of introspection that Mel and Joe probably haven't experienced. Minna, in contrast, is a good - and unfortunately rare - example of someone who pursued conventional success, found it wanting, and then had the courage to make a change that didn't lead to material riches. But her life itself was made richer.

Craig Nathanson, The Vocational Coach, works with those over 40 to discover and do the work they love. He is the author of "P Is For Perfect: Your Perfect Vocational Day," by Book Coach Press. Visit his online community at <http://www.thevocationalcoach.com> where you can sign up for his monthly Tele-class.

LIFE'S PURPOSE

By Onaefe Umenu Edebi

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To every life, there is a purpose; a purpose of will and a purpose of choice. A choice to make the right or wrong decisions and the will to act on the choices made.

There is no life that exists that is without a purpose, for everyone exists for something or someone. It may be one single act to which one is born; maybe an act of five minutes. Not so long compared to a life time you would say. But most people live their whole life without having lived—without having lived their purpose.

To many, life is a cycle—a routine, it does not end but goes on as birth to youth, youth to adulthood, then to old age and death, which would normally come after one has given birth, thereby continuing the cycle.

Now, what is the purpose to ones life? Unless God makes it known to a man, no one can tell, but that you look deep within yourself, as it is placed within you to know your reason for existence.

A man who lived twenty years on earth and achieved his purpose for life is exceedingly greater than one who lived a hundred years and never achieved his purpose.

A difference between them is that ones name would be written in The history as an achiever, while the other, it would have been better if he were not born.

Therefore pray to the Father—God, to make known to you your purpose for this life. And most importantly, **LIVE OUT YOUR PURPOSE**

Onaefe Edebi is a teacher, instructor and motivational speaker.

LIFE'S PURPOSE

Freedom Through Purose

Discover Your Purpose In Life

Affiliates Should Ask For The Sale

Among the Purpose & Personality

How to Gain and Retain More Customers

Yard Sale Secrets Revealed

Motivate Your Way To Success

How to Use Your Mind for Study

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