

Introduction

The answer to career and life quandaries is simple, really. We only need to know the WHAT that we want. The HOW and WHY aren't necessary—in fact, they can be obstacles to action.

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Thank you for taking the first step in investing in the most important asset you have: you! I first want to state that your Quest for Purpose is a continual journey until the day you die. It is not something you will ever “reach,” like a goal (though goals contribute to your purpose); rather, it is an active-tense experience through which you are unceasingly engaged in the realization of your purpose. This quest is not to be a burden or a performance measure, but rather a state of *being* and *doing*, aligned with your calling, through which you find life to be fulfilling, rewarding, and personally purposeful.

But sadly, most of us will not acknowledge, realize, or claim our life purpose. There are numerous studies to support this position, including the Gallup global workplace study (142 countries), which shows workforce engagement at less than 13%. That means, at best, 87% of the population dislike what they do, from “mildly irritated” to “loathe.”

I live near Vancouver, British Columbia (Canada)—consistently ranked as one of the top five most attractive and livable cities in the world. Yet, a recent life satisfaction survey across Canada identified Vancouver residents as having the lowest level of life satisfaction in the country. Why the disconnect—could one reason be a lack of purpose?

We live in a time of unceasing information and choices. The reality is that all these options can overwhelm someone who has not taken the time to clarify their life purpose. At this moment, there are 40,000+ job descriptions, and growing every day, in the U.S. alone. Some of the jobs that some of you will have, or will do, have not even been invented yet.

What could be some of the reasons that so many individuals are not living their life On Purpose?

- Society’s “microwave” and ADHD expectations could be part of the problem—if people can’t figure it out in a 5-minute assessment or 10-minute conversation, then they will abandon the purpose process because of their impatience.
- Maybe it’s the narcissistic mindset, demanding instant gratification, which is in conflict with the deep, mindful, thoughtful, and reflective process of determining and confirming life purpose of contribution and giving—not self-centeredness.
- Perhaps it involves misguided priorities, where we will spend more time, money, and energy on entertainment in one weekend than in developing ourselves or discovering our purpose. One of my students said he would never spend \$50 on an assessment to help get clearer on who he was, yet he headed out that very night and dropped over \$50 on a movie, drinks, and food. Our priorities are reflected in our actions.

- The developed world's dysfunctional obsession with consumerism falsely suggests that fulfillment comes from that next great purchase or acquisition; sadly, that "consumerism high" quickly fades.
- Some individuals are overwhelmed by the question of living On Purpose and have no idea where to begin or start, so they acquiesce to a life of indifference, admitting failure and quitting before they even start.
- Some are misguided by well-meaning relatives, friends, and colleagues who discount the concept of purpose or dreams, so they relent under peer pressure from others who, in many cases, are not clear about their own life purpose, either.

I had the privilege of having dinner with Richard N. Bolles (author of the bestselling book ***What Color Is Your Parachute?***) and Richard Knowdell, a veteran in the career development industry. Between the two of them, they have 80+ years' experience in the career development and life purpose arena. So I asked them why—with so many resources, books, and programs available for career and life direction—are there so many people unclear about their life direction and purpose? In unison, they answered, "People are not willing to do the work!"

Could another reason that we are unclear about our life purpose is that we are simply *lazy*?

It takes effort to confirm our purpose, and with the advent of mobile media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.), perhaps it is easier to be a mindless observer and a "fan" of life, rather than a participant and player. The unfortunate fact is many of you reading this line (in the introduction, no less) will probably not finish this book. Distractions abound, and it requires discipline to focus on what is really important.

However, I want to deeply encourage those of you who will take the steps and engage your "Quest for Purpose and life clarification process"—it is worth it! It is the difference between merely existing and living a bright, alive life. It is not that those with purpose have any fewer challenges (in many cases, they have more), but that they are deeply connected to their interests, gifts, talents, and calling, which daily inspire them to take action; at the same time, living their purpose *fulfills* them.

The Quest For Purpose was written for those of you who want to realize your potential in all areas of your life, so that you might be able to contribute at the highest level, which is where the greatest amount of personal and spiritual fulfillment is realized. This is an expanded book from my previous version, ***My Source Experience Journal***, because you—the reader and participant—wanted more information, directions, and processes to help you achieve your own Quest for Purpose.

I thank you for the honor to contribute to your journey confirming and clarifying your life purpose; after all, my own purpose