

# A Well Lived Life of Purpose

Most of the people I know and work with want a life of meaning and purpose, not a life where we just get by ...

A well lived life, that feels meaningful.

But this isn't taught in schools, and most of us feel completely unsure of how to move towards this.

I'm not going to fully answer how to live a life of purpose in this article ... but I'd love to talk about how to move in that direction.

## **Commitment**

The first thing you might consider is committing yourself to finding a life of purpose. How important is that to you? Are you willing to move into uncertainty for this, or is comfort and safety more important to you at the moment?

To commit, you have to commit in the gut. To tell yourself that this is important enough to devote yourself to, to dedicate time, to practice with the uncertainty. Commit to yourself, on paper. Then to others.

## **Exploration**

The second thing to consider is embarking on an adventure of exploring your purpose, if you don't already have a good sense of it. It's not as simple as asking, "What would I like to do?" or doing a web search for the answer. You have to explore it, and bringing a sense of adventure might be just the right approach.

Here's how I usually recommend exploring purpose:

1. Make a list of things that you think might be meaningful to you — helping children in need, helping people reduce stress, traveling to help communities in need, etc. Put anything on the list that's even remotely possible or interesting, don't limit yourself here. Hint: I've found that the most meaningful things are when you're helping other people with something you care about.
2. Ask yourself which 3-5 of these would be most meaningful. If one really stands out — maybe it's the thing you've been wanting to do for years — then that's where to start. But maybe you're not sure, so pick 3-5. This is your short list.
3. Of those, let your gut choose the top one. If you absolutely don't know, either choose randomly, or ask a friend. This isn't your final answer, but just the one you're going to

start with.

4. Choose a 2-week version of this top possibility. For example, if you want to help people with stress, could you help 1 person over video calls and email for 2 weeks? This is the mini-version of your possible purpose. Explore this for 2 weeks, really pouring yourself into it.
5. If this really resonates, make a one-month version of it and continue to explore. If it doesn't, pick the next thing on your short list. Do a 2-week version of that. Repeat until you find something to explore for a month or longer.

This is the iterative method of purpose exploration. You try a mini-version of something for a couple weeks. Maybe longer. And keep doing this until you hit on something.

Notice if you feel like avoiding this process, or a part of the process. This is your uncertainty showing up as fear. That's completely OK, but you might ask whether you'd like to get support with that uncertainty, so you don't have to be stopped.

## **A Well Lived Life**

There are an infinite number of possibilities for living a well lived life. You might meditate on a mountain for years, or enjoy the simple things. You might enjoy time with loved ones, or explore culinary pleasures. You might read all day, or listen to music. You might get your work done, and come home satisfied from a job well done.

For me, one of the biggest components of a well lived life — other than loved ones and a profound appreciation of life — is doing something that feels meaningful. And that has usually been helping others with something that's meaningful to them.

If you can serve others, make their lives better in some small way (or a big way) ... it feels incredibly meaningful. Much more than simply traveling or building up wealth or enjoying good food or having fun. Those are all great, but they don't feel as meaningful to me.

If you can hit on something like that, that feels meaningful ... then a well lived life becomes simple:

Spend quality time with loved ones.

Take care of yourself.

Find profound appreciation for the joy of life.

And serve others in a meaningful way.

It's simple, but not always easy. And that makes it even richer.