



## **PurposeFULL Living Discovery**

Why do you get up in the morning?" A simple, yet complicated question that many of us struggle to answer, as we try to understand our life's purpose – and its impact on our work and careers.

Trust me, purpose is a verb, let's discover why...

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*"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why" — Mark Twain*

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You're walking along a crowded street with other people on their way to work. Many of them look bored, resigned, stressed, or a little checked-out. They seem to be going through the motions. Suddenly you realize that you are not just an observer – you are one of them! Are you living or simply, surviving? How many people do you know that live FULL lives? If you are like me, it's just a handful.

Did you enter your life and career with high expectations and excitement for the future. But now it is painfully apparent that you are bored most of the time, unfulfilled, and losing the motivation to get up in the morning?

I hope you choose to be a participant, and not just an observer in your journey to greater awareness and fulfillment - you can be a pilot or a passenger! This guide is about getting unstuck and stepping confidently into the career/life of your dreams. The key to transforming yourself from someone who is simply surviving in their career and life to a person who successfully leads in a purposeful life is taking the time to understand yourself and the process.

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*The Glory of God is Man (Persons) Fully Alive*

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I made the mistake of leaving education after serving for over 25 years without working with a coach/counselor. This mistake propelled me to gain the needed skills to guide people through the process. I felt called out of education and “thought” I wanted to work in corporate America. After a long, arduous process of applying to jobs I quickly learned the process had drastically changed from the 1990’s. I didn’t know about keywords, algorithms, applicant tracking systems, or the importance of an updated resume customized to the employer.

After working in “corporate” America for a year I quickly realized that my real “calling” was in education, counseling, coaching, and truly adding value to people’s lives. I felt unfulfilled, lacked motivation, and even struggled with depression. It was hard to get out of bed in the morning. (I’ll cover career exploration depression in a later section). While corporate America can be a great place for many it just didn’t fit my personality and values. It didn’t meet my strong desire to connect, contribute, and grow to help other people grow.

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*“Work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. The other four balls-- family, health, friends, integrity-- are made of glass. If you drop one of these, it will be irrevocably scuffed, nicked, perhaps even shattered” — Gary Keller*

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I hope my story will help you and that you will learn from my mistakes. After all, we oftentimes learn the most from our failures: *FAIL FORWARD*. I certainly learned a lot and see my world through a different lens. I have now made my life’s mission to engage others not merely to survive, but to thrive; with passion, grit, compassion, and humor – inspiring and empowering people to be best version of themselves.

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*“Working hard for something we don’t care about is called stress; working hard for something we love is called passion” — Simon Sinek*

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When we think about why we do what we do, it sometimes scares us or makes us feel uncomfortable. We may think, I’m not Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi or Nelson Mandela with a grand sense of purpose. That’s okay. You and I are not expected or required to have a magnificent Purpose statement. We simply need to understand **our** purpose, big or small, **own it – EMBODY and LIVE it.**

**Purpose shouldn't be an existential crisis; instead, it should be a source of guidance and motivation that empowers individuals to navigate life's challenges and find fulfillment in their daily experiences.**

Purpose is a very **personal** thing – it’s why you do the things you do, whether at work, home or in your community. It’s the ultimate driving motivator for you. Purpose provides clarity, meaning, and direction and is your constant around everything you have done and will do. This doesn’t mean that

your Purpose is the same throughout life; a common misconception about Purpose is that it is just one definitive thing. It isn't. Purpose can take many different forms – some people may be finding their Purpose for the first time while others may be re-Purposing.

One of the most sacred things that we can offer another human being besides love is our work. It is an offering of our energy, our time, our inspiration, our strengths, and ultimately our desire to take ACTION. It is through our labor — which is really our LOVE in ACTION — that we share our greatest gifts with one another.

**I've lived my entire life desiring to be in SERVICE of something bigger. The most life-changing lesson I have learned (and relearned) is that my most impactful contributions happen when I'm IN PURPOSE. Purpose is the unique GIFT that you bring to the world.**

Knowing your purpose in life brings greater focus, confidence, contentment and meaning to life. Becoming a more authentic you improve your performance and well-being. You're well positioned to make a very positive difference for others when you start with yourself.

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*"Purpose is the ultimate source of momentum - it's about feeling that you're adding value. Purpose is the most powerful way we can prevent languishing, unlock our potential, and maintain peak performance" —Adam Grant, Wharton*

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Simon Sinek is one of my favorite authors and speakers. Obviously, it is hard to stop with one quote because he speaks with such passion and wisdom. He became a sensation after he presented a [TedTalk](#) on knowing your why. In fact, it is the third most watched TED Talk of all time. His book is entitled, *Start with Why – How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*. His work resonates with me because it gets to the heart of why we do the things we do.

When we help ourselves, we find moments of happiness.

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*When we help others, we find lasting fulfillment" – Simon Sinek*

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He teaches that starting with why is the foundation to discovering your life's best work. This is the purpose or call that drives you – it's a calling and mission. I love his analogy about changing everything in your home – paint color, doors, windows, siding, etc. but you cannot change your foundation. Why is your "foundation" and leads you to your life's mission, your purpose, and your gift to the world. We build upon and grow from our foundation – it strengthens you.

Simon has written a new book entitled, *Find your Why – a Practical Guide for Discovering Purpose for You and Your team*. It picks up where *Start With Why* left off. Read Simon in his own words:

*“The concept of WHY is a deeply personal journey born out of pain. I discovered the idea at a time when I had lost any passion for my work. The advice people gave me wasn’t helpful either: “Do what you love,” “Find your bliss,” “Be passionate.” All accurate—but totally un-actionable. I agreed with all the advice in theory, but I didn’t know what to change. I didn’t know what to do differently on Monday. And that’s the reason the WHY has been and continues to be such a profound force in my life.*

*Not only did discovering my WHY renew my passion, it gave me a filter to make better decisions. It offered me a new lens through which I would see the world differently. And it was through this lens—to inspire people to do what inspires them so that together each of us can change our world—that I started preaching the concept of WHY and the Golden Circle. And people listened. In fact, people did more than listen, they joined me in preaching this message, sharing the vision. And our movement was born.” (Sinek, September, 2017)*

Sinek says we may know our what and our how but knowing our why gives our life meaning and purpose. For example, Zappos mission statement is “to live and deliver wow.” They just don’t sell shoes – their purpose is creating the very best customer service through a company culture that leaves you *wowed*.

Too many of us define our lives by what we do for a living rather than accepting what we do for a living as just a part of an overall purpose that guides our lives — or, as Simon Sinek would call it, a why.

All businesses, organizations, and careers operate on three levels: (1) what we do, (2) how we do it, and (3) why we do it. **We’re all acquainted with what we do**—the products we sell, the services we offer, the jobs we do. **A few of us know how we do it**—the things we think differentiate us or make us unique compared to the rest of the crowd, or our competition. **But only a handful of us can clearly articulate why we do what we do.**

Your why is what sets you apart from everyone else. It’s your purpose. It’s what inspires you to take action. Your why is also what inspires *others* to take action, spread your ideas, or buy your products. Your why statement is the most effective possible way in which you can articulate your why—your purpose... not just to other people, but to yourself as well.

## Opposite of Depression = Purpose

35% of waking hours are spent at work yet we spend so little time considering work that is energizing. Search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, believing we MATTER can make a meaningful impact. PURPOSE(FULL) life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying!

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*“Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live” —Norman Cousins*

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In a discussion of purpose and after living in unimaginable conditions, Viktor Frankl, author of *Man's Search for Meaning*, wrote, "Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose." People need their lives and effort – and their work – to matter.

Frankl was a Jewish psychiatrist and neurologist who was arrested and sent to a series of concentration camps during World War II, including Auschwitz and Dachau. During his time in the camps, he witnessed and experienced unimaginable suffering and brutality, including the loss of his wife, parents, and brother.

Despite these traumatic experiences, Frankl was able to find meaning and purpose in his life, which he later wrote about in his influential book. He believed that even in the most difficult and challenging circumstances, we still have the power to choose our attitudes and responses, and that this ability to choose is what gives our lives meaning.

Frankl believed that the search for meaning is a fundamental human need, and that it is possible to find meaning even during suffering and adversity. He wrote,

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*"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way"*

*—Victor Frankl*

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**He also believed that DESPAIR = SUFFERING – MEANING. (Let that sink in.)**

Frankl's experiences in the Holocaust and his subsequent reflections on the search for meaning have had a profound impact on psychology and philosophy, and his work continues to inspire people around the world to find meaning and purpose in their own lives, even in the face of adversity.

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*"I cannot believe that the purpose of life is to be happy. I think the purpose of life is to be useful, to be responsible, to be compassionate. It is, above all, to matter, to count, to stand for something, to have made some difference that you lived at all." — Gary Keller*

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## **Ikigai**

Ikigai is a Japanese concept that combines the words "iki" (life) and "gai" (value or worth). It loosely translates to "reason for being" or "waking up to joy." The idea is that your Ikigai is the convergence of the following elements, a central point that provides a sense of fulfillment, happiness, and balance in life.

- What you love (your passion)
- What you are good at (your vocation)
- What the world needs (your mission)
- What you can be paid for (your profession)

It is no coincidence that in the Okinawa culture, which belongs to the cultures where people live the longest, everyone knows their Ikigai. National Geographic reporter Dan Buettner (TEDX talk, How to Live to be 100+) identified five communities across the world where people live longer and are healthier than the average. These Blue Zones® have common factors, one of them being that the inhabitants have a strong sense of purpose!

Okinawa was a place of extreme suffering and death during World War II. Yet, many decades later there are more people over the age of 100 than any other place on earth. They are replete with joy, serenity, community, and activity. They understand the value of kindness and living in the moment even after devastation!

## “Know Thyself” – Self-Reflection

The two words spoken by Socrates that have been immortalized are "*Know thyself*." This phrase encapsulates Socrates' emphasis on self-awareness and introspection as essential for personal growth and understanding. It begins with being *curious* about yourself and your desires.

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*“We are what we repeatedly do.” —Aristotle*

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When you know who you inherently are, what you like and don't like, and your strengths and weaknesses, you start to understand where it is you want to go in life and how best to get there. You learn how to grow and the way you want to grow.

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*“The secret of success is learning how to use pain and pleasure instead of having pain and pleasure use you. If you do that, you're in control of your life. If you don't, life controls you.” —Tony Robbins*

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You cannot give away what you don't possess. We can live our entire lives not knowing who we really are. And the more change there is around this, the better. Knowing yourself brings confidence, clarity, and wisdom.

## Discover your Purpose

I suggest thinking about four core elements of purpose:

- **Passions** – Understanding what makes you excited and gives you energy.  
To understand your passions, ask yourself, what are the things I do that make me lose track of time?
- **Talents** – Understanding your unique strengths, gifts, and talents.  
Signs of talents: yearnings, rapid learning, fulfillment, flow, excellence (comes naturally).
- **Values** – Understanding your guiding principles.  
To understand your values, ask yourself, when faced with tough decisions, what factors do I consider to make the decision?

- **Habits -: Rituals** - It's estimated that nearly half (around 45%) of our daily actions are performed instinctively, driven by ingrained habits. When aligned with our purpose, these consistent actions can drive significant progress towards our goals. Simply stated, we are what we repeatedly do.

Passions, gifts (talents), rituals, and values all work together to inform your purpose and help you live a *PURPOSEFULL* life.

**When looking at it individually,**

- Passions fuel your purpose with energy and aliveness, igniting a sense of enthusiasm and motivation that drives you to pursue meaningful goals.
- Talents support your purpose by providing the skills necessary to thrive.
- Your values guide your purpose by setting the moral and ethical framework to ensure your actions align with what truly matters to you.
- Rituals ensure intentional action while fostering continued growth and progress creating consistent and daily progress.

Another way to delve into your purpose is to reflect on what keeps you up at night—those deep-seated concerns or causes that you are passionate about. This introspection can reveal significant insights into your purpose.

**IMPACT.** Ultimately, the cumulative impact of living our lives with purpose extends far beyond personal fulfillment. It manifests in several profound ways including:

**Greater IMPACT in the World:** When your actions are aligned with your purpose, you contribute to causes and projects that create lasting change. Your efforts can inspire others, address pressing social issues, and foster positive developments in various spheres of life.

**Enhanced Quality of Life:** Living purposefully enriches your life experience, bringing a sense of satisfaction, joy, and meaning. This enhanced quality of life radiates outward, influencing those around you and creating a ripple effect of positivity.

**Strengthened Communities:** A purposeful life often involves contributing to and supporting your community. By focusing on what you're passionate about and applying your talents in meaningful ways, you help build stronger, more cohesive communities that thrive on mutual support and shared values.

In essence, living with purpose not only brings personal fulfillment but also creates a powerful ripple effect, enhancing the world, your own life, and the lives of others around you. It answers the question...

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*How do you improve the moment?*

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In two words, **GROW + GIVE.**

## Developing your WHY Statement

### Your why statement should be:

- Simple and clear
- Actionable
- Focused on how you'll contribute to others, and
- Expressed in affirmative language that resonates with you

Your why statement should be able to encapsulate all the qualities we just mentioned—and it should be able to do so in a single sentence.

### Examples of Why Statements:

**Example #1. Simon Sinek's why statement "To inspire people to do the things that inspire them so that, together, we can change our world."**

The *impact* Simon wants is for each of us to change the world, in however way we can, for the better. But this alone is too broad. It's incomplete until his intended *impact* is combined with his *contribution*—the work he actually does on Monday morning to make change happen.

The *contribution* portion—to inspire people—is what ties it all together, bringing focus and direction to the *impact* he wants to make on the world. Simon's *contribution* is essentially what he does (to make his why a reality).

**Example #2:** "To empower and educate people everywhere so that they can improve their lives and achieve their goals."

**My WHY:** To inspire and empower others to *THRIVE* in purpose, performance, and clarity so that together we can live fuller lives.

## Stories for Reflection

**The discovery of how you can live a purposeful life you love is found hidden in the STORIES you tell about your life.** It's who you cannot help bringing when you are at your best – in your flow. Clues and themes can often be found in ENGAGEMENT and ENERGY.

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*"Words may inspire, but only ACTION creates change.*

*Most of us live our lives by accident – we live life as it happens.*

*Fulfillment comes when we live our lives on purpose." —Simon Sinek*

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Story 1: A recent moment or event in your personal or professional life that you thoroughly enjoyed.



Story 2: Pinpoint one person who has significantly influenced the person you have become. What did they do? Tell a specific story that clearly explains the impact they had on you.

Story 3: Who is your hero? Why?

Story 4: 5 things that you value that you hold most dear. Circle the one thing you cannot live without.

Story 5: What did you love doing as a child? Do you recognize any natural talents or intersections from those activities?

Story 6: What do you want your life/career to do for others? What is one way that you would like to be a force for change in the world?

Story 7: What is your superpower? What's your kryptonite?

Story 8: What are you most **curious** about? Clues that will help you answer: Time passes quickly (FLOW). It's so interesting, you can't help spending time on it!

Story 9: If someone stuck a microphone in front of you and asked, "What were you created for? What would you say?"

Story 10: When did you experience ALIVENESS (what energizes you)?

Story 11: What keeps you up at night?

Story 12: What activities would infuse my life with more joy and meaning?

Story 13: In what areas of your life or career do others seek your counsel?

Story 14: What do you want to be remembered for?

Story 15: If you were to ask ten of your closest friends/coworkers to complete this statement about you: "You were born to \_\_\_\_\_."

What do you think they would say? Have you ever asked them? Why not?

**PLACE: sometimes place can be a big part of your purpose in life and in career. Reflect on the following:**

- Is there an organization or environment that you feel particularly drawn to
- Think about a time when you felt a strong sense of belonging. What about the environment made it feel perfect for you?
- How content and settled do you feel in your current surroundings?

## The Why Statement Format

Reflect on your answers for a few days bringing intentional attention to the answers/themes. You will probably have several first drafts of living aspirations. As you grow, mature, and have new life experiences, your sense of purpose will change.

### Simple format to use as we draft our why statement:

To \_\_\_\_\_ so that \_\_\_\_\_.

The first blank represents your **contribution** — the contribution you make to others through your why. And the second blank represents the **impact** of your contribution.

**Contribution:** action/verb , storyteller’s superpowers!

**Impact:** What your storyteller believes all people deserve to feel or experience. It’s not an action – it’s something they hope will happen.

## 7 days of Free Journaling on Purpose

1. **PASSION:** What did I love doing (what energized you)? What depleted me?
2. **TALENTS:** What was I good at (strengths/skills)?
3. **RITUALS:** How are my habits helping or hindering a more intentional life?
4. **IMPACT:** What is my unique contribution (fingerprint)

## Other Great Videos and resources on Purpose and Self-Awareness

### Assessments

Stand Out – discover the best and most meaningful version of yourself (Marcus Buckingham).

SparkType - essential nature of work that fills you with meaning and lets you feel fully-expressed, alive with purpose and absorbed in flow (sparked) by Jonathan Fields.

16 personalities – in order to know yourself better and articulate your value.

Via Character Strengths Finder - The VIA Survey is the only free, scientific survey of character strengths. Take this simple, 10 minute character test and discover your greatest strengths. Research shows that knowing and using your character strengths can help you:

- Increase happiness and well-being
- Find meaning and purpose
- Boost relationships
- Manage stress and health
- Accomplish goals

What is your Driving Force by Tony Robbins. Every single person has the same fundamental six “human needs,” but each person places different levels of importance on them and has unique

beliefs about how to satisfy those needs. By understanding what your #1 human need is and how that shapes your behavior, you can take control over your life's direction and even learn how to create new patterns that unlock your hidden potential and lead you to lasting fulfillment.

DISC test – Self-awareness is essential to success. If you don't know what drives your actions and behaviors – it's difficult to cultivate positive growth. The DISC shows you how to leverage various aspects of your personality for a life that aligns with your personal values. DISC examines how an individual ranks in the four primary personality types and is sometimes represented using animals and colors. Here's a summary of how the DISC model is often represented with animals and colors:

1. **Dominance (D)**: Often associated with a **Red** color and represented by a **Lion**. This style is characterized by assertiveness, directness, decisiveness, and a focus on results.
2. **Influence (I)**: Typically associated with a **Yellow** color and represented by a **Otter** or **Parrot**. This style is known for being sociable, charming, enthusiastic, inspiring, and persuasive.
3. **Steadiness (S)**: Usually associated with a **Green** color and represented by a **Golden Retriever** or **Dove**. This style is marked by patience, sincerity, reliability, and a preference for stability.
4. **Conscientiousness (C)**: Commonly associated with a **Blue** color and represented by a **Beaver** or **Owl**. This style is characterized by attention to detail, accuracy, compliance, and a focus on quality.

These animal and color representations simplify the DISC framework, making it more intuitive for people to identify and understand their own and others' personality styles.

## Videos

The Origin of the Why – in 5 minutes

Trombone Player Needed by Marcus Buckingham

Netflix – I Am Not Your Guru with Tony Robbins

Steve Jobs Commencement Speech

Simon Sinek – Start with Why. Third most listened to podcast of all time.

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*"We imagine a world in which the vast majority of people wake up every day inspired, feel safe wherever they are and end the day fulfilled by the work they do." –Simon Sinek*

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**This is your superpower! This is you experiencing BEING ... *fully alive*.**