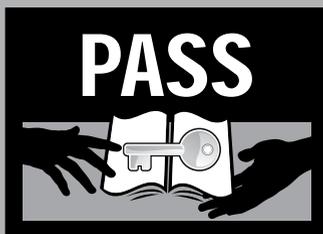


Living With Purpose

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Name: _____

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“Finding purpose is the most important path we trod.”

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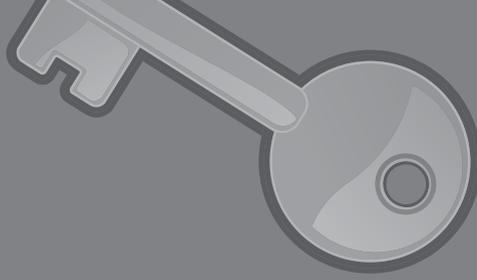


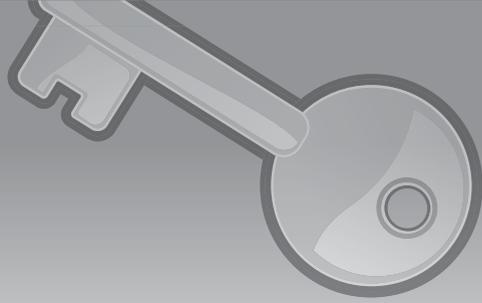
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CHAPTER 1: What Is Purpose?

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CHAPTER 1: What Is Purpose?

Purpose is our reason for living. Purpose includes who we are, where we come from, and where we are going. Having a clear purpose gives meaning to our lives, a specific direction, and an understanding of our human experience. Purpose is where our energy and motivation come from. Purpose allows us to make sense of our day-to-day experiences.

Our purpose satisfies our deepest core and makes it worthwhile to live and cope with difficult aspects of our existence. Purpose fulfills our need and ability to contribute to life. Purpose is our legacy which outlives our own lives.

According to numerous studies, people with a clear sense of purpose report being happier than the average person. People living their personal purpose “focus” on the important things as well as a “vision” of the future they want. The older people get, their life’s purpose grows in importance. Happiness, contentment, and satisfaction with life come from finding purpose in life regardless of gender, culture, and geographical locations. Purpose allows the day-to-day aspects of life to make sense.

Going to prison is certainly a crisis of purpose, and crisis is often the opportunity we need to “let life question us.” In challenging circumstances, we uncover our purpose. It is under these circumstances that we, many for the very first time, let go of our mundane day-to-day petty worries, conflicts, and attempts to control, by instead focusing on the most important parts of our life. Prison can be a crisis that spurs an inner questioning and revamping of one’s entire life perspective.

Knowing your purpose also simplifies your life. People who don’t know their purpose get off track and become unfocused. They try to accomplish too much instead of focusing on their life’s purpose and doing that one thing well. As a result, they often experience stress, fatigue and conflict in their lives. This occurs when we stray from the path of our purpose.

Knowing your purpose focuses your life. The power of focusing can be seen in light. When light is focused as a laser beam, it can cut through steel.



MYTHS REGARDING WHAT IS PURPOSE

Myth 1: *To have purpose means I must do something original.*

Reality: Most ideas are offshoots of what has come before. We could not have discovered/created steel without the discovery of iron. We could not develop hybrid fruits, vegetables, and flowers if we did not have their original forms first. We are often carrying the torch of what has come before us.

Action: By searching the ideas of others we can begin to generate ideas of our own.

Myth 2: *Only a few special people have a purpose to their lives.*

Reality: The biggest myth is that you must be an expert to make an important contribution. This is false. There are countless examples of important contributions made by ordinary people.

Action: Passion is more important than expertise. Find your passion first, then study the details of it.

Myth 3: *True purpose comes as a revelation or epiphany.*

Reality: If we sit waiting for inspiration to suddenly hit, we may wait forever. If you ask any successful person, you will not find someone who waited until inspiration was thrust upon them.

Action: Start the process and then inspiration will hit along the way. We discover purpose along the journey.

Myth 4: *Purpose is nice but impractical. Money and things are practical.*

Reality: Examine how much of your time is spent in activities which are actually very "impractical." How much time do we spend watching television, for example, is a question that can help us rearrange our priorities.

Action: We all have to make a living, and have commitments to others, but if we are clear about what is really important, we place energies where they really matter.

Purpose is NOT a set of goals. We can have goals and achieve them without the fulfillment of finding and pursuing our life's purpose. One of the main tasks in our life's calling is



to confront that “mysterious” part of ourselves. To do this, we must squarely face core questions. At adolescence we ask, “Who am I?” As a young adult we ask, “What is my calling?” In middle adulthood we ask, “What is my next step for my calling?” The older adult asks, “How do I grow whole, not old?” We lastly ask, “What is my legacy?”

Please answer these questions to begin the self evaluation process:

Before prison, my actions were focused primarily on:

Before prison, my “inner strength” came from:

Since incarceration I [have ____ / have not ____] thought about these past actions and beliefs.

Please expand upon your present feelings as to your present inner strength and focus. Please include any changes you feel have occurred and what may have motivated those changes. You will not be judged for what you believe. You are the judge of you on this issue.
