



LIFE ON PURPOSE FINDING A FUTURE THAT FITS

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

"The average person currently can expect to have three different careers during their lifetime."

—Richard Nelson Bolles, "The 1995 What Color is Your Parachute?" A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers (Berkeley, Calif.: Ten Speed Press, 1995), p. 154

GET A JOB OR A LIFE?

"The things that organizations were doing to people in the 1980s and even up to now-layoff announcements are always coming-were so dehumanizing and had no regard for the spiritual nature of people. Maybe we don't look at things as jobs anymore because jobs come and go. Maybe people are starting to say, 'What's my work in life? Jobs may come and go. What's my contribution to society?' "

—Judith Neal, Associate Professor of Management, The University of New Haven, quoted by Jim Morrison, "Corporate Soul," American Way (November 15, 1995), p. 96



DISCUSS

Have you ever feared getting stuck in a job and saying to yourself, "This is not what I want to do with the rest of my life?" Imagine yourself 20 years from now. What would you like to be true of your life?



DISCUSS

What do you think Neal means by the 'spiritual nature of people'? What, if anything, does a person's 'spiritual nature' have to do with 'work in life'?

Richard Nelson Bolles is regarded as one of the world's premier career-counseling experts. Since 1972, his book "What Color is Your Parachute?" has been the best selling job-hunting book in the world--selling more than 5 million copies in seven languages and appearing on the New York Times bestseller list 288 weeks.

SHORT AND LONG OF IT

"When we are very young, work is largely a matter of how to find bread to eat, and clothes to wear, and how to put a roof over our head. But as we move through the various stages of our life, our work becomes increasingly a matter also of how our soul lives out its dreams...And, through each of our work choices during our lifetime, we increasingly find ourselves looking for the work we feel we were born to do." —Bolles, Your Parachute, p. 155



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THOUGHT

"The only true happiness comes from squandering ourselves for a purpose." –William Cowper, English poet (1731-1800)



DISCUSS

Do you agree or disagree with Cowper? Why? What might a person's life look like if it was 'squandered' without a purpose?

DEFINITION

Squander: To spend wastefully or foolishly.

GOAL DODGERS & SEA DRIFTERS

" 'Cheshire Puss...Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't care much where,' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you walk,' said the Cat."

–Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1995), pp. 65-67.



DISCUSS

What causes people to feel as if their life is drifting in no particular direction?

GOAL DIGGERS & HIGH STEPPERS

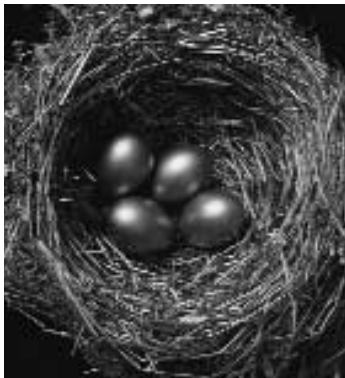
"It's incredibly easy to get caught up in an activity trap, in the busy-ness of life, to work harder and harder at climbing the ladder of success only to discover it's leaning against the wrong wall. It is possible to be busy--very busy--without being very effective."

–Stephen Covey, "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), p. 98.

DEFINITIONS

Purpose: the object for which something exists.

Mission: a continuing task or responsibility that one is destined or fitted to do or specially called upon to undertake.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Goal:

- A measurable result
- Achieved at a later time
- Many and varied
- Something chosen

Purpose/Mission

- A direction
- Fulfilled in each passing moment
- Single and constant
- Something discovered

–Compiled from John Roger and Peter McWilliams, "Do It! Let's Get Off Our Butts" (Los Angeles: Prelude Press, 1991), pp. 135,137.



DISCUSS

How would you describe your purpose or mission in life? How would you go about discovering it?

PURPOSE AT A CROSSROADS

"There are all different kinds of voices calling you to all different kinds of work, and the problem is to find out which is the voice of God rather than that of society, say, or the superego, or self-interest. By and large a good rule for finding out is this: the kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work **(A) THAT YOU NEED MOST TO DO AND (B) THE WORLD MOST NEEDS TO HAVE DONE.**"

–Frederick Buechner, "Wishful Thinking-A Theological ABC" quoted by Bolles, "Your Parachute," p. 460.

Look in the Mirror

YOUR DEEP GLADNESS: THE WORK YOU MOST NEED TO DO AND WANT TO DO.

THE RIGHT STUFF

"We are to begin deciphering our unique Mission by studying our talents and skills, and more particularly which ones (or one) we most rejoice to use." –Bolles, *"Your Parachute,"* p. 458.



DISCUSS

Why did you choose your current job or profession? Does it enable you pursue the work you most need and want to do?

MISHAP?

"The world in which we live can be understood as a result of muddle and accident; but if it is the outcome of deliberate purpose, the purpose must have been that of a fiend. For my part, I find accident a less painful and more plausible hypothesis."

–Bertrand Russell, *"Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects"* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), p. 93.

OR MASTERPIECE?

"On Saturday, August 22, 1741, Handel seated himself at his desk...picked up a stack of blank music sheets and wrote at the top MESSIAH. The 56-year-old musician bowed his head and asked the Lord's blessing, then chewed the end of his quill, dipped it into ink, and started to compose. Within minutes music began to leap from him in a living stream. It was hard to keep up with the harmony that stirred in his soul. Hour after hour, day after day, he filled sheet after sheet...Thus, the oratorio Messiah was completed in just 24 days. This was a miracle of creativity..., as he was concluding the "Hallelujah Chorus"...tears dripping on his desk, the near-penniless composer exclaimed, 'I did think I did see all heaven before me and the great God Himself.'"

–Charles Ludvig, *George Frederic Handel* (Milford, Michigan: Mott Media, 1987), pp. 157-158.



DISCUSS

Which of the two perspectives represented here do you find yourself living by the most? Why? What bearing do you think your perspective has on discovering your life purpose?

BE HONEST, NOT MODEST

What activities do you believe you do exceptionally well? What talents and skills do you enjoy using the most? What talents and skills produce in you a deep sense of satisfaction?

Try to imagine pursuing a mission in life in which you regularly use talents that produce in you a "deep gladness" but seldom, if ever, help satisfy the world's "deep hunger." What would be the benefits and drawbacks of such a life pursuit?

SCENARIO 1 TALENT - TOUCH =

Look out the Window

THE WORLD'S DEEP HUNGER: THE WORK THE WORLD MOST NEEDS TO HAVE DONE

HEADACHE?

"Hell is other people." –Jean-Paul Sartre, French philosopher (1903-1980)

OR HEARTWARMING?

"It gets an M.B.A. student's feet right back on the ground in a hurry to come out of mid-terms and sit down with a young person and do algebra or social studies or basic reading. You have to put everything aside and focus on a young person. It's gratifying."

–Matt Rath, graduate student at Boston College and director of the school's mentoring program. quoted by Mary Lord, *"Making a Difference,"* US News & World Report (March 20, 1995), p. 88.



DISCUSS

Which of these two perspectives most closely describes your attitude toward people? Why? What bearing do you think that has on discovering your life purpose?

UPSIDE DOWN WISDOM

"Napoleon Bonaparte, a leader's leader, knew every officer of his army by name. He liked to wander through his camp, meet an officer, greet him by name, and talk about a battle he knew his officer had been involved in. He never missed an opportunity to inquire about a soldier's hometown, wife and family. Since every officer felt Napoleon's personal interest in him--proved by his statements and questions--it is easy to understand the devotion they all felt for him."

—John C. Maxwell, *Developing The Leader Within You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993), p.117.



DISCUSS

What seems paradoxical about this illustration from the life of Napoleon? What can you learn from it?

DEFINITION

Paradox: "A truth standing on its head crying out for attention."

—G.K. Chesterton, English journalist and writer (1874-1936).

FLAT OUT JOY

"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

—George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright (1856-1950).

GRIN MAKERS, BLOOD BOILERS & TEAR JERKERS

What do you see in the world around you that makes you smile?

What do you see in the world around you that makes you angry?

What do you see in the world around you that makes you weep?

Try to imagine pursuing a mission in life in which you regularly help satisfy the world's "deep hunger" but seldom, if ever, use talents that produce in you a "deep gladness." What would be the benefits and drawbacks of such a life pursuit?

SCENARIO 2 TOUCH - TALENT =

Look for the Crossroads

GLAD TO MEET THE NEED

Try to imagine pursuing a mission in life in which you regularly use talents that produce in you a "deep gladness" while at the same time help satisfy the world's "deep hunger." What would be the benefits and drawbacks of such a life pursuit?

SCENARIO 3 TALENT + TOUCH =

MADE TO FIT

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

—Buechner, "Wishful Thinking," quoted by Bolles, "Your Parachute," p. 460



APPLICATION

How you answer these questions will help you discover your life purpose:

What are my talents and abilities?

What needs can I help meet?

Is there an infinite and personal God who gives meaning to my life?

Why or why not?