

Priming Your Passion

By Dr. Brad Swift

We are going to start a fun and engaging exercise that is at the heart of starting to live one's life according to one's own personal life purpose: the opportunity to create your life purpose. The life purpose you create will become the vessel or container into which you pour your life, and which will then begin to shape and form your life.

The first step to creating your life purpose is to gather together the supplies and resources you'll need. When you paint a picture, you start with a blank canvas. The next step is to gather up the brushes and paints needed to paint your picture.

But where does the material come from to create a life purpose?

That's one of the paradoxes we'll find in the Land of Purposeful Paradoxes. While you will, in essence, be creating your life purpose from a blank canvas, unencumbered by the limits of your past experience, you'll get the "paint and brushes" from your past. In other words, we will consider and take into account the past without being limited by it.

The next part of the Life on Purpose Process will help you to tap into particular parts of the past when you've been most alive, turned on, excited, creative, and exuberant about living. Revisiting these times will evoke thoughts and feelings. These emotional and mental responses—these molecules of meaning—will serve as the building blocks of your Created Life Purpose.

It's in those times when you have felt most alive that you've been closest to your life purpose. To further expand the paradox, although a life purpose is not about what you do, a good bit of what we'll explore is what you've been doing in those times of your greatest aliveness.

Remember, a life purpose is the context or vessel in which you hold your life. It's this context that then contains our daily lives

and shapes and directs our actions—the "doingness" of life. As we learned in a previous chapter, the most powerful life purposes are a compilation of the following elements:

- The vision you hold for what's possible for yourself and the world
- Your core values—what matters most to you
- The essence of your being—who you are and what people can count on from you

For example, for me a Life on Purpose is a life of purposeful, passionate, and playful service, mindful abundance balanced with simplicity, and spiritual serenity. This purpose reaches into my life and shows up in all the actions I choose to take. It's always the same life purpose, same context, yet there are many different ways of expressing it. The point is that *a life purpose is a way of being or a vision that inspires what you do*. Or, said another way, your life purpose is what your soul came here to be and to experience.

Now, don't worry about which part of your Life Purpose Statement reflects your vision, which holds your core values, and which is the essence of who you are. These components are all blended together with the "bonding agent"—the attractive force of Universal Love. It's a little like baking a cake. When you're all done, you can't tell which part of the cake is the flour and which part is the sugar. It doesn't really matter, as long as the cake is delicious. You'll be creating the context for a delicious life.

Your creative mind and your rational mind, and the thoughts and feelings they evoke, will prime your passion pump. They will be the paintbrushes and the colors from which you will create your life purpose.

The next assignment is Priming Your Passion. Before you begin, there are three things you should do to approach this exercise:

- *Ponder your thoughts and feelings as you live your daily life. As you read the questions that make up the assignment, go through the next few*

days reflecting upon them. This can be done as you drive to work, take a shower, or start to drift off to sleep. Give yourself a few days of pondering.

- *Write down your thoughts and feelings.* Journal about what you were pondering, and feel free to add anything new that comes up as you write. Collect the data that will become the building material of your Life Purpose Statement.
- *Talk to other people* about your life, your life purpose, and the questions. Other people who know you well and who support what you are up to in your life can be great resources for additional material. Listen to them like you would listen to your coach. In other words, listen for what resonates with you. If it resonates, keep it. If not, leave it. For example, if someone says, “The time I’ve seen when you were most alive and turned on about life was back in March, when you were preparing your taxes,” and tax preparation is one of your least favorite things to do, then simply leave that thought on the shelf.

After talking with people, go back to your journal and add anything new that you’ve gleaned from these conversations. The idea is to fill your palette with plenty of paint.

Bonus Coaching Tip: Some people enjoy using art to help in this process. Some of the processes my clients have used include scrapbooking, creating a collage, or painting a picture of their Life on Purpose. Be as creative as you’re led to be.

Call to Action Assignment: Priming Your Passion

Clarifying your life purpose is a team effort between the rational mind and the intuitive mind. The following exercise is an effective way to combine these two powerful

resources to help you move forward along the Purposeful Path.

Working with the following questions engages your rational mind. The memories and thoughts that arise will prime the pump, making it easier to access the intuitive or creative mind. By the end of this exercise you will have a rough draft of a purpose statement. As you go about your daily activities, continue to refine and shape this statement. A life purpose is a living thing. It grows and evolves as you care and nurture it.

Step One

Ask yourself these questions and then write down your responses in a journal, adding whatever comes to you as you write. Ask other people who know and support you how they would answer these questions about you, to bring in other viewpoints. Add whatever new insights come from these conversations to your journal so you will have a rich body of information to draw upon.

1. What do you love to do?

Look at times in your life when you were most alive, excited, in love with life. What were you doing during those moments? Who were you with? Ask people who know you when they’ve noticed you most alive and enthusiastic.

2. What kind of people do you love to be with?

Answer this both specifically (as in the specific people you love to be with) and in general (as in the types of people you enjoy).

3. What are some of the things you could do to give yourself the opportunity to spend more time with these people?

Think of jobs, volunteer opportunities, sports, and so on.

4. *If money, time, energy, and talent were unlimited, what would you do with your life and who would you be?*

If it's difficult to imagine any of these being unlimited, make a note of this. Then, let go of that concern and continue the exercise.

5. *Who are some people that you greatly admire?*

These may be celebrities, people from history, family members, or friends.

6. *What is it about these people that you admire?*

Is it a way of being, or a set of values, or what they are up to in life? Be as specific as you can.

7. *What values are most important to you?*

It's important to distinguish between the values that you think you should feel are important, and the ones you choose of your own free will.

Step Two

Go back through the material you collected from these questions. Look for the common thread or central theme that runs throughout. Come to it like a detective goes to a crime scene. The detective doesn't wonder if there are clues. He knows there are clues, and his job is to find them. There is a common thread or central theme, and your job is to find it—no matter how well it is disguised. In fact, there are often more than one, so find as many of them as you can.

Process Tip: One way to do this is to go through your notes with different colored markers and circle repetitive words, phrases, or ideas. You may find that you wrote about being outdoors several different times, and other times you wrote about nature. They are probably part of the same thread, but you'll have to judge that for yourself. Remember, if you aren't having fun, you're going down the wrong path.

Coaching Tip: Remember, your life purpose is about who you are as a soul or spiritual being and what you came here to experience. So, as you determine what you have loved about your life, look behind the doing to who you were being and what you were experiencing, and put that into words that capture the feeling.

For example, you may love to walk in the woods. That's the doing. What do you love about walking in the woods? Who are you present to being as you walk in the woods, and what do you experience? Peace? A closer connection to God? Write those "molecules of meaning" down.

Step Three

You are almost ready to create your purpose statement. There's just one more thing to keep in mind before doing so. And remember, whatever you create today can be changed or erased and rewritten. In other words, *you aren't stuck with any life purpose*. This is very important. All you're doing right now is creating a rough draft to try out for a couple of weeks.

Once you've exercised the rational mind, it's time to call in its tag-team member: your intuitive, creative side. Pick your favorite way to access your intuitive powers. It may be meditating or taking a long walk, run, or drive. Or set an intention to dream your life purpose. Read through your journal material and then access your intuition.

If you're still uncertain about your purpose statement after doing these things, you can find further clarity with the next step.

Step Four

As soon as you've finished Step Three, complete each of the follow statements at least three to five times.

- *A life purpose is _____ -*

- *The purpose for which I'm here on the planet is*

- *For me, a Life on Purpose is a life of*

- *The vision I hold for the world is*

Write down a brief statement or two to describe what your life purpose is today. Remember, this is your rough draft. It's impossible to get it wrong at this point, because this statement is only the beginning. See if you can keep it to no more than three sentences.

Coaching Tip: Remember, this is intended to be a fun and engaging exercise that will take as long as it will take. There's no need to rush it, and if you find that you aren't having fun, it only means you've strayed off the Purposeful Path a bit. Put it away for a day or so and come back to it. Check around to see if your Inherited Purpose has slipped in to start shaping your life. If so, let go of it before resuming the exercise.

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