

What do you want out of life: Navigating Big Change

Theme: NSC

KW: how to figure out what you want in life, how to figure out what you want to do in life

Tag/topic: Purpose/yearning

Intro:

What do we want out of life? For most of us, a sense of purpose is high on our lists. But how do we find that? By stepping back and looking at the larger picture of our yearnings. These universal longings can lead us to everything we've always wanted for our lives, including our purpose!

Why are We Here? Forget the Meaning of Life. Focus on the Meaning of This Moment

I have good news, and I have great news.

Here's the good news: we don't have to meditate on a mountain top to discover our life's purpose. We don't have to become Mother Teresa or Gandhi. We don't have to save the whales or find the cure to cancer (though that *could* be part of our calling).

As human beings, we may wonder, "Why are we here?" We worry about what our purpose is and whether or not we're achieving it.

So, here's the great news. **[To discover our life's purpose](#), all we have to do is focus on THIS moment**—*focus on what our purpose is in THIS moment.*

Maybe it's making breakfast for our kids before they head to school or finishing writing a document for a meeting later today. Maybe it's checking in on a friend who's having a hard time—or enjoying a moment of quiet and gratitude before we go to bed.

Can that really be it? It seems too easy.

Yes—that's why it's great news!

Our Presence is Requested

All our spinning and racing and putting our lives under a microscope to find out what they mean is NOT going to get us to that meaning any faster. Instead, it may do the opposite—distract us and slow us down.

I know plenty of people with a big life purpose who rush around trying to achieve that mission 24/7, to the exclusion of other aspects of life. I have done it, and maybe you have too. But when we do that, our moments aren't meaningful. We're not paying attention to what's happening RIGHT NOW, which leaves us surprisingly lost, and unfulfilled.

I say surprisingly because so much of our culture encourages us to do exactly that—live in the future, not in the moment. However, listening to what is being asked of us RIGHT NOW—and responding with our whole selves—WILL lead us to our bigger purpose.

[When we learn to live each of our moments more purposely](#), the bigger purpose of our lives will begin to emerge.

Why is that?

The purpose of our moments will always be tied to our deeper yearnings. Yearnings are the universal longings of the heart that we all share—to connect and create, to serve, to matter, to love and be loved, to matter, to be seen and understood, to make a difference.

When we are focused on meeting our yearnings, we're focused on connecting with our hearts. And when we connect with our hearts, we are aligned with our divine flow, and **we can't help but fulfill our purpose.**

Sounds good, doesn't it? So, the only question we need to ask is, "HOW are we focusing on our yearnings at this moment?"

Because that's where the nourishment is! That's what keeps us fulfilled and striving. That's what leads us to that beautiful future we are constantly scrambling to create. That's what gives us momentum.

We Can't Make This Stuff Up

The momentum of our lives happens by being present in the moment—by allowing what's happening to happen.

I didn't pre-decide that I was going to cofound a graduate university. Or write a best-selling book. Those realities unfolded because I was present in the moment. I was listening to my

yearnings. And the more I listened, the more a future bigger and better than anything I could make up was “suddenly” presenting itself to me.

The truth is, I couldn't have dreamed big enough to achieve what I've achieved by simply living in the moment.

When we have faith in the present, seek engagement in life, live in the delight of what can happen, and are led by our whole hearts, the opportunities arise.

“Don't push the river, it flows by itself.”
—Frederick S. Perls

Let's Not Pretend We Know the End

Full-out engagement in life means we let ourselves explore our curiosities, AND we don't assume we know how it will feel or turn out.

It turns out [we're not very good at forecasting what will make us happy anyway](#). We tend to inflate or exaggerate the intensity and duration of the good feelings we will experience when we get what we want. Researchers Daniel Gilbert and Timothy Wilson coined the term “mis-wanting” to describe exactly that.

What can we do instead? **Trust that we are whole and complete as we are.** Trust emergence.

So often (too often!), we think we need to have things figured out/edited/polished. But there can be a beautiful process when we live in the flow. **Our successes don't have to be forced. Instead, we can be curious.** We can also hold others in that same space. We can be an agent of emergence for others.

We can choose to believe we have everything we need to solve our problems. Instead of asking ourselves, “How can we MAKE this happen?” we can allow what needs to emerge to emerge.

Our presence with ourselves and others, listening to and following our yearnings by being in the moment, allows the emergence.

Things DO unfold. Purpose does emerge. Afterall, purpose is really just listening to our yearnings as they exist in the moment!

In other words, we don't need to learn the meaning of life. We simply need to learn the meaning of OUR lives, one moment at a time.

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