

Are you living your life on purpose, or is your life running you?

Some people live on purpose and some just respond to what the world delivers. A “life purpose” is not something you do, or something you have. Rather, what you “do” is an expression of your life purpose. Having a life purpose guides all your choices and shapes the direction of your life. It is your unique GPS (Global Positioning System). It is the compelling reason to be who you authentically are. Everyone has purpose in life. Let’s look at how you can define yours. Below are some examples of what a life purpose is, what it is not, and the benefits of consciously living your true and distinctive purpose:

What is a “Life Purpose”?

- A focus, an intent
- A powerful shaping force for your life
- It includes your vision, core values, passions, and the essence of who you are
- An expression of who you are when you are reaching your full potential
- It is the container in which you pour your life
- It encompasses all of your life
- It is lived throughout your life journey, not a destination
- It is the role you play in making the world a better place

What a “Life Purpose” is not:

- Something you should be doing, or based on any “should’s”
- Limited by a role you have (parent, employee)
- Something that just lives inside of you, it includes others
- Coming from fear, lack, need, or struggle to survive
- Something you achieve, complete or arrive at
- Your education or experience
- What other people expect of you
- A to-do list

Benefits of discovering and living your life purpose:

- It serves as a measuring stick for life decisions
- It is the cornerstone for any goal



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- It helps you find meaningful work and other groups to be involved in
- It is like a compass keeping you on track, always guiding you in the right direction
- It acts like a big neon sign to redirect you when lost or stuck
- Your life becomes more satisfying, fulfilling and fun
- It maximizes your talents, strengths and gifts
- You see your efforts produce results
- Things happen more easily, and with less obstacles
- Your values, beliefs, and daily decisions come into alignment
- It frees the unnecessary clutter from your life, thus reducing stress
- It gives you plenty of room to express yourself
- You are proactive, not reactive; you live by choosing not wishing
- It is long-lasting, and endures challenge and change
- It is designed to nurture yourself and those around you

Questions to consider in knowing and intentionally living your “life purpose”:

1. Where are you going? Do you really want to go there? What can you do about it?
2. If you really knew who you genuinely are and had the guts to be that person, who would you be?
3. How, where, and with whom would you enjoy contributing to others?
4. What could there be more of - that’s intangible - to make the world a better place?
5. As of now, what things have you left untried, undone, or unsaid?
6. How do you want to share, to serve, to grow?
7. As you travel through life - as a ship travels free from rocks and other hazards toward the lighthouse on the coastline - what would represent your “lighthouse”? Your life purpose statement is your own personal lighthouse.
8. What emotional blocks, old patterns, and unhealed wounds need to be addressed to help you become whole and begin to live with purpose?
9. If your life were a movie, what would the current “theme” be? What constant and consistent theme do you desire it to be?
10. If your life is always being shaped by something and you are not clear about your life purpose, then what is shaping your life?
11. What would be possible if you knew your divinely inspired life purpose?
12. What would be possible for your self and for those around you if your thoughts, decisions, choices and actions were shaped by this unmistakable purpose? What is it costing you if they were not?

Developing a life purpose statement can take some time. Consider words that describe you most at peace, yet joyful and whole, (Ex: simplicity, spirituality, compassion). Your intuition will guide you.



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Pay attention to what makes your heart sing, to what fills you with bliss. Notice when you are the most happy and fulfilled. Notice what you gravitate towards. You are most excited and motivated to live a great life of what, exactly? This is your opportunity to define “success” - not goals but ways of being. Beginning now, how will you bring about the purposeful possibilities in your life?

“It can certainly be difficult to tune out all of life’s distractions in order to focus your energy on what truly matters. Yet it is much easier than living with the emptiness of a life without direction.”

- *Ralph Marston*

“What is it that you want to do with the one, wild, precious thing called your life?”

- *Mary Oliver*

“Let yourself be silently drawn by the stronger pull of what you really love.”

- *Rumi*

“If you don’t know what you stand for, you will fall for anything.”

- *Unknown*

For more information about life coaching opportunities to assist you in defining and living your most purposeful life, or to request Susan Gillpatrick to lead a wellness program with your group or organization, call (615) 460-4445. For individual or family counseling services in Middle Tennessee, contact Centerstone at (615) 460-4357, or visit www.centerstone.org

About Centerstone

Centerstone (www.centerstone.org), celebrating 50 years of service in 2006, is the largest behavioral healthcare provider in Tennessee and the ninth largest in the nation. A not-for-profit organization, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to individuals of all ages and their families. Centerstone is devoted to research that seeks to identify, treat and eliminate mental illness. Each year, the organization provides services to more than 45,000 individuals. The Centerstone network includes more than 60 facilities throughout the middle Tennessee region. For more information about Centerstone, please call (615) 460-4357 or toll free at (888) 291-4357.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone’s wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone’s Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, “Homicide Response.” Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.