



## Living Life with a Purpose

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**S**ome people measure success by the wealth they've accumulated, the power they've attained, or the status they've achieved. Yet, even though they've reached success beyond their wildest dreams, they still have an empty feeling — something is missing from their life.

In order to fill that void and be completely fulfilled in life, their soul may be searching for something more.

Here are a few scenarios that describe this emptiness:

**Lonely at the top.** I was obsessed with making it to the top. When I arrived, however, I learned that it wasn't all it was cracked up to be. I now realize that my continual pursuit of advancement seriously compromised my ability to spend quality time with my family and build meaningful relationships with friends.

**Enough is never enough.** One of the ways I kept score in life was to compare my toys to my neighbors' toys. It felt good for a while, but each "high" just didn't last. I now know better. I realized that if I'm not careful, the game of life can become an obsession — there will always be people with more and less than I have.

**Sold my soul.** I would have given anything to be a success. I lied, cheated, and sold my soul to the devil. I understand now that although I've obtained fame and fortune, people don't like or respect me. Knowing what I've done, I find it hard to live with myself, and others seem to agree.

**All work and no play.** I was always the first person in the office and the last one to leave. While my business life has been a roaring success, my personal life has been a disaster. I realize there's got to be more to life. Balance matters, and I must be the one to make it happen.

**Pleased everyone except myself.** I never made a move without first seeking the approval of my friends and family. They're happy, but I'm miserable. I now appreciate that my opinion matters too, and counting on others to make up my mind for me is just a cop-out. After all, it's my life and I own it.

**Lived in the future rather than the present.** I spent much of my life thinking about what I was going to do tomorrow. Now that I'm older, I've come face-to-face with the reality that my days won't go on forever; I wish I had learned to savor every special moment as it happened.

If any of these scenarios sound familiar to you, it may be time for a course correction.

### Living Life with a Purpose

Although everyone is different, there are common threads that bind a life with purpose.

**Live by your beliefs and values.** People who live a life of purpose have core beliefs and values that influence their decisions, shape their day-to-day actions, and determine their short- and long-term priorities. They place significant value on being a person of high integrity and in earning the trust and respect of others. The result is that they live with a clear conscience and spend more time listening to their inner voice than being influenced by others.

**Set priorities.** People who live a life of purpose identify those activities that **matter most** to them and spend the majority of their time and effort in those areas. Otherwise, it's too easy to drift away in the currents of life. As Annie Dillard once said, "How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives."

**Follow your passion.** People who live a life of purpose wake up each morning eager to face the new day. They pursue their dreams with fervor, put their heart into everything they do, and feel that they're personally making a difference. As James Dean once said, "Dream as if you'll live forever. Live as if you'll die today."

**Achieve balance.** People who live a life of purpose put their heart into their career and in building relationships with friends and family. They also reserve adequate time to satisfy their personal needs. Achieving balance means living up to one's potential in all facets of life.

**Feel content.** People who live a life of purpose have an inner peace. They're satisfied with what they have and who they are. To them, the grass is greener on their own side of the fence. As the saying goes, "The real measure of your wealth is how much you'd be worth if you lost all your money."

**Make a difference.** People who live a life of purpose make a meaningful difference in someone else's life. They do things for others without expectation of personal gain, serve as exemplary role models, and gain as much satisfaction witnessing the success of others as witnessing their own. As the old proverb says, "A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle."

**Live in the moment.** People who live a life of purpose cherish every moment and seek to live life without regret. They take joy in the experiences that life gives and don't worry about keeping score. Dr. Seuss may have said it best, "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."

### Start Living Today

The purpose of life is a perpetual question that has intrigued mankind since the beginning of human existence. Without purpose, it's easy to wander aimlessly through life instead of following your North Star. Without purpose, it's easy to squander your [time](#) instead of waking each morning

with an unquenchable thirst to attain your mission. Without purpose, it's easy to achieve remarkable success and still feel that life is passing you by.

Success in life begins with purpose. When you achieve clarity, you'll gain a new perspective on your life. When you find your purpose, you'll feel good about who you are, what you stand for, and where you're heading. When you discover your purpose, an inner peace will replace the need to seek approval from others. And friends and family will begin to sense a new you: someone who is happy, motivated and self-assured — a person with a mission. People will say that there's something really special about you. And, they'll be right! As Robert Byrne once said, "The purpose of life is a life of purpose." It isn't too late to start. ●

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Frank Sonnenberg, a marketing strategist, has written four books and published over 300 articles. • *IndustryWeek* named the first edition of *Managing with a Conscience* one of the Top Ten Business Books of the Year. The second edition of *Managing with a Conscience* is now available. • Salon.com named Sonnenberg's blog among the top 100 in 2009 • Trust Across America named Sonnenberg one of the Top 100 Thought Leaders of 2010 • In 2011, *Social Media Marketing Magazine* (SMM) selected Sonnenberg as one of the top marketing authors in the world on Twitter. [www.franksonnenbergonline.com](http://www.franksonnenbergonline.com) © 2011 Frank Sonnenberg. All rights reserved. If you want to re-post or republish this post, please email [frank@franksonnenbergonline.com](mailto:frank@franksonnenbergonline.com). Thank you for respecting intellectual capital.