

## Purpose

1 Your feelings and emotions are your strongest indicator if your life is moving in a purposeful direction or not, so listen closely to how you feel. **Rebecca Rosen**

2 Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break and all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. **L. R. Knost**

3 Things don't have purposes, as if the universe were a machine, where every part has a useful function. What's the function of a galaxy? I don't know if our life has a purpose and I don't see that it matters. What does matter is that we're a part. Like a thread in a cloth or a grass-blade in a field. It is and we are. What we do is like wind blowing on the grass. **Ursula K. Le Guin**

4 Discovering one's "purpose" in life essentially boils down to finding those one or two things that are bigger than yourself, and bigger than those around you. It's not about some great achievement, but merely finding a way to spend your limited amount of time well. And to do that you must get off your couch and act, and take the time to think beyond yourself, to think greater than yourself, and paradoxically, to imagine a world without yourself. **Mark Manson**

5 If you want to identify me, ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair, but ask me what I am living for, in detail, and ask me what I think is keeping me from living fully for the thing I want to live for. Between these two answers you can determine the identity of any person. **Thomas Merton**

6 Aim above morality. Be not simply good; be good for something. **Henry David Thoreau**

7 If love were the central practice of a new generation of organizers and spiritual leaders, it would have a massive impact... If the goal was to increase the love, rather than winning or dominating a constant opponent, I think we could actually imagine liberation from constant oppression. We would suddenly be seeing everything we do, everyone we meet, not through the tactical eyes of war, but through eyes of love.

. . . .We would understand that the strength of our movement is in the strength of our relationships, which could only be measured by their depth. Scaling up would mean going deeper, being more vulnerable and more empathetic....

**adrienne maree brown** is a women's rights activist and black feminist based in Detroit

8 If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up someplace else. **Yogi Berra**

9 *Constantly exposing yourself to popular culture and the mass media will ultimately shape your reality tunnel in ways that are not necessarily conducive to achieving your Soul Purpose and Life Calling. Modern society has generally 'lost the plot'. Slavishly following its false gods and idols makes no sense in a spiritually aware life.* **Anthon St. Maarten**

10 *When you see people only as personalities, rather than souls with life missions to fulfill, you forever limit the growth and possibilities of what God has in store for another person.* **Shannon Alder**

11 There are two missions we are obligated to carry out during our life journey. The first, is to seek Truth throughout our lifetime. The second, is simply to be good. . . .The hardest part, is dealing with all the obstacles that prevent smooth sailing. **Suzy Kassem**

12 To say that the purpose of life is happiness is like saying that the purpose of a tree is to grow roots. That's not the purpose; that's how you start. **Robin Sacredfire**

13 **A poem and notes about the poem by the author**

I will not die an unlived life  
I will not live in fear  
of falling or catching fire  
I choose to inhabit my days  
to allow my living to open me,  
to make me less afraid,  
more accessible,  
to loosen my heart  
until it becomes a wing.  
A torch, a promise.

I choose to risk my significance; to live  
so that which came to me as seed  
and that which came to me as blossom  
goes on as fruit.

**--Dana Markova**

. . .before my foot hits the floor each morning, I say the words of my poem aloud, slowly. They are the path, and the light I need to follow it. Each evening, when my feet are safely tucked into bed, I whisper the words again, in order to check whether I have lost the way, gotten crooked, or am still on path. They are how I know if my soul is leaking or burgeoning.

The poem is a candle that my soul holds out to me, requesting I find a way to remember what it is to live a life with passion, on purpose. There is only enough light to take the journey step by step, but that is all any of us really needs. This book is a paper trail of the steps as I took them, the ideas, questions, dreams, images, and experiments, the exploration through a dark wilderness of heart and mind.

I do not understand the physics of ripples. I do not know why people who have read this poem write to me from all over the world. I do not even know really if, like my child, it came through me, as well as for me. There is so much I don't know right now.

But I am sure there are many others in this particular time, who, like me, are feeling very disconnected from the world that pours forth anguish like rain. I know there are others who need to learn to live in an interdependent, diverse, ever-changing world, a world in which the unexpected is the expected, and breakdown and reconstruction of everything we know is daily fare. . . .

We all feel a tremendous push from the past and a compelling pull from the future to step fully into who we were meant to be. We need courage and time to reorder our priorities and consider internal exploration as important as "our career" and outward success. We need to practice the art of stripping away false notions about who we think we are so we can deal with what is real, and release anything that is deadening to our spirits. We have to learn to reconnect with ourselves so that we can stand for something that is greater than ourselves.

--**Dana Markova**, in her memoir, *I Will Not Die an Unlived Life* (MBH excerpt)

14 When you're pedaling, you're riding the bike. When you're coasting, you're just along for the ride. **Ned Overend**

15 The marksman hits the target partly by pulling, partly by letting go. The boatsman reaches the landing partly by pulling, partly by letting go. **Egyptian proverb**

### **Purpose and Relationship**

16 It's understood that we all have unhealed places, and that healing is the purpose of our being with another person. We don't try to hide our weaknesses, but rather we understand that the relationship is a context for healing through mutual forgiveness. This means to be emotionally naked, totally real and honest; not embarrassed, but accepted [seen] completely. **Marianne Williamson**

17 Whether it is clearly visible or not, every relationship has a higher purpose than itself alone, a meaning that goes beyond the conventions of love and romance, and attaches the two people in it to a destiny that has roots in the past and wings in the future. This purpose is to shape us individually into the highest and best versions of ourselves and to change, if only in some tiny way, the essential character of the reality we have entered here by being born. **Daphne Rose Kingma**

### **For Reflection and Discussion**

A How does "purpose" figure in your life? Do you have a "purpose" that you are able to put into words?

B Do you experience "purpose" as a long-term goal?

C Was there some incident, some person, some place that helped you discover your purpose? Talk about the "help."

D How would you assess your own "steadiness of purpose"? Do you need to be reminded of your purpose? Talk about a specific reminder, or a practice that you rely on to stay on purpose.

E How has your experience at All Souls contributed to your understanding of your purpose? How does your experience at All Souls contribute to your ability to accomplish your purpose?

--Mary Beth Hatem, for All Souls Church, Unitarian