



BY SARAH MCLEAN

Why am I here? Discovering Your Life's Purpose

W

hy am I here? What is my purpose in life?" Asking these questions marks the beginning of your search to finding your life's fulfillment. Following the path toward a life of meaning and purpose is different for everyone. Here are some steps that have been taken by many who live a fulfilling life.

continued on pg. 76



Sarah McLean, founder and director of the Sedona Meditation Training, was the education director of the Chopra Center in California and has taught hundreds of people to meditate.
www.SedonaMeditation.com

b

ecome self-aware so you can recognize the point of transition. One of the keys to transitioning to a life full of meaning and purpose is acknowledging the nagging feeling that there was more to life than what you are doing now. Perhaps you don't feel satisfied and nothing on the horizon looks like it will do the trick. Do you sense

there is a greater reason for being but don't know what it is? Have you had enough? Does your job feel like a grind? Do you feel unfulfilled?

Ask yourself these important questions: Begin your day with meditation or prayer and ask yourself these questions: What is my purpose in this life? Why am I really here? What is my heart's desire? Then listen. The answers might not come to you right away, but be patient, and look for clues. Don't try to come up with the answers intellectually or figure it out. These are questions that you want to be answered in a more expanded way.

Listen to your inner voice above all. Listening to your inner wisdom or intuition takes practice and

anyone can do it. Intuition is very real. It is your internal wise, yet quiet voice. Your intuition doesn't steer you wrong. When you act on your intuition and respond authentically to the cues around you, you'll begin to trust your own wisdom and unlock the keys to your happiness. Meditation is a key to unlock your intuition. By spending time in silence every day through meditation or prayer you can expand your awareness and quiet the noise and distractions from the outside.

Notice what you are attracted to, pay attention to your internal yes and no, or your yums and yucks. Act on them. Your body is wise and intelligent. While you are reading this, it exchanges oxygen molecules for carbon dioxide molecules, constantly replaces the cells in your body, monitors and controls your temperature and your heartbeat, and so much more. Your body is your best friend. It communicates with you through sensations of comfort and discomfort. You can tune into and become more aware of your bodily sensations. Pay attention to what you are attracted to. Becoming aware and honoring how you feel in each moment is vital to a successful journey toward a more fulfilling life.

Tune out the "should's" from those around you.

Take a leap of faith and trust in your dreams. A bad habit is when we are dependent on other people's opinions of us. Finding your purpose sometimes means going against the advice of close friends and family.'

Gandhi once said, "There are times when you have to obey a call which is the highest of all, i.e. the voice of conscience, even though such obedience may cost many a bitter tear, and even more, separation from friends, from family, from the state to which you may belong, from all that you have held as dear as life itself. This obedience is the law of our being."

Look for clues and be open to possibilities:

Clues to your life's purpose might be found in the answers to these questions: How do you spend your free time? What were your hobbies when you were a child? Perhaps you'll find clues in books or CDs that catch your attention. Spend time with people who are living their dreams. When you are onto something, synchronicities may become more frequent. That is a big clue. An opportunity to find and express your passion might be revealed or serendipitous event that reminds you of what's important and what makes you happy.

Richard Bach, author of Jonathan Livingston Seagull writes: "Nothing happens by chance, my friend... No such thing as luck. A meaning behind every little thing, and such a meaning behind this. Part for you, part for me, may not see it all real clear right now, but we will, before long."

Notice who you admire, and put your attention on what kind of person you want to be.

You might admire your mom, grandfather, a mythological, biblical figure, a world leader or boss. Make a list of who they are and what qualities they have. What you put your attention on grows. So check your list and aim to embody the qualities of those you admire.

Be patient. Trust the wisdom of the universe.

You will sense that you are onto something when you experience joy or peace in the moment, feel energized by your activity or sense that you are being supported in your efforts by the universe, nature, God or your higher power. Know that life is on your side. Have faith and patience. Be open to signs and wonders, coincidences and opportunities. Keep your commitment. When you are on the right path, there is a flow that happens. You think of someone and they call.

continued on pg. 78



"EVERYONE HAS A PURPOSE IN LIFE, A UNIQUE GIFT OR SPECIAL TALENT TO GIVE TO OTHERS. WHEN WE BLEND THIS UNIQUE TALENT WITH SERVICE TO OTHERS, WE EXPERIENCE THE ECSTASY AND EXULTATION OF OUR OWN SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ALL GOALS."





STEVE JOBS, THE FOUNDER OF APPLE COMPUTER, SHARES HOW HE FOUND HIS PASSION:

"I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle. You have to trust in something - your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life."

You have a desire to do something and the opportunity presents itself. This will help you to develop great faith in the creator that you are being led in the right direction.

Practice gratitude. Put your attention on what you have. Then ask for what you want. Grateful people do not deny or ignore the negative aspects of life. According to the experts, it's easy to regret the time you've spent being unhappy or unfulfilled. Research has found that those who practice gratitude report higher levels of positive emotions, life satisfaction, vitality, optimism and lower levels of depression and stress. The disposition toward gratitude appears to enhance pleasant feeling states more than it diminishes unpleasant emotions.

How do you know when you are on the 'right' path? Here are some of the signs people cite:

"It took me quite a bit of whole-body tuning-in to learn to feel it, but there's a physical sensation of sweet ease in the center of yourself, between your chest and belly, that will let you know you are moving in the right direction." Gay Hendricks, author *Conscious Loving*.

"The first sign would be a feeling of general happiness and satisfaction. If you drag out of bed in the

morning and can barely face the day, then you're definitely not on the right path. If you hop out of bed and you are enthused about what you are doing, then you are." –Deborah King, Ph.D., author of *Truth Heals: What You Hide Can Hurt You*.

In his book and DVD, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, Dr. Deepak Chopra shares:

"We all seek our unique destiny, our place in the cosmic plan. It is known as dharma and it is more than seeking work that you love. The root of the word 'dharma' in Sanskrit means 'to uphold.' This is a valuable clue. You know you've become part of the cosmic design when the universe upholds and supports you. Every principle of nature comes to your aid, every power supports you spontaneously.

"The universal mind choreographs everything that is happening in billions of galaxies with elegant precision and unfaltering intelligence. Its intelligence is ultimate and supreme, permeating every fiber of existence from the smallest to the largest, from the atom to the cosmos. You are an impulse of the universe."

"Everyone has a purpose in life, a unique gift or special talent to give to others. When we blend this unique talent with service to others, we experience the ecstasy and exultation of our own spirit, which is the ultimate goal of all goals."