

3. What do you feel have been your ten greatest successes in work or life to date?

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4. Is there a cause, following or activity that you feel really passionate about?

5. What are the ten most important lessons you have learnt in your life?

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6. Think back over your life. Are there some issues or perceived problems that have occurred over and over again?

7. What do you daydream or dream about doing?

8. Imagine you are writing your epitaph. What things would you want to be remembered for?

9. What things would your life be incomplete without?

10. What would you do if you could not fail?

Conclusions

Now, narrow down your responses to the ten questions and write down any **themes** you notice.

To compose your life purpose statement, synthesising your responses to the questions, use the following format:

“My life purpose is to[essence]..... through[expression].....”

The “essence” stays relatively unchanged over your lifetime. It is the hardest for most people to articulate. Examples could include:

- to enhance peace in the world through...
- to help underprivileged children find purpose in life through...
- to promote corporate integrity through...
- to find my own path and help others find their path through...
- to provide environments where people can express themselves freely through...
- to provide the next generation with the tools to make choices through...
- to be there to provide support to my family, friends and local community through...

The “expression” is the ways in which the essence is expressed in your life right now. It will change as your life circumstances change. It is how and what you will do next. Some examples might be:

“.....through working in a company that values authentic communication, dedicating myself to conscious parenting, and volunteering at the local library once a month”.

A sample life purpose statement might read:

- My life purpose is to increase the harmony and love in the world through working as a child and family therapist using a harmonious communication approach, pursuing peace in all of my personal and professional relationships, volunteering with Peace on the Planet Foundation, and teaching my children to seek harmony instead of discord.
- To help people communicate better and leave a legacy through consulting with family-owned businesses, conscious relationships with my partner and children, volunteering at

non-profit organisations, and building my self-esteem through assertiveness training, physical fitness, and investing toward my retirement.

- To nurture the earth through learning about conservation, working for a national park, and developing my skills as a teacher for nature guides and conservationists.

Obstacles to discovering your life purpose

If discovering your life purpose were easy, everyone would have already done it. Even the ten questions will not result in instant awareness for everyone. It is important to be patient with the process and let it unfold. If you are struggling to clarify your life purpose, ask yourself if you are:

1. Overlooking the value of an interest, skill or passion, taking it for granted and assuming everyone has it. We often overlook things that we do on a day to day basis, or because it has been part of our role or duty within our family or work.
2. Insisting that everyone's life purpose is completely unique and profound. It is normal for many people to want the same things out of life. A life purpose does not have to be world changing or profound but specific to you, however wide ranging that is.
3. Feeling the pressure to just get a job and make a living. Everyone is so busy these days and the financial pressures in people's lives can be very real. Perhaps it is possible to find a transitional state – a role that will pay the bills but not take up 100% of time and energy? Most people will not be fulfilled and satisfied in their work until it becomes an expression of their life purpose.
4. Thinking that a life purpose is only for special people. Everyone has a purpose, not just artists, writers, musicians and religious leaders (please excuse the slight stereotyping!).

Based on concepts from Marcia Bench, Career Coach Institute