

Success Mini-Course

Lesson Five

“Purpose”

By Terry Drew Karanen

The last of the five “P’s” is Purpose. This step is the underlying necessity behind the previous four steps. Our purpose is that which propels us into the action. It is what permits us to accomplish the goals on our path. In discussing purpose as the fifth step in creating a life worth living, it becomes a reminder of the very reasons for our desires.

It is easy to get into doing “it,” whatever “it” is, and forget our purpose. There is a logical reason for this and especially true for people with an inclination to being obsessed with accomplishing goals. Our purpose holds a dual role. Part of its function is to act in a capacity much like a supervisor. It stands quietly in the background overseeing all the activity in our lives. At the same time it is the real reason there is activity in the first place. It is the basis for our activities. It empowers our vision.

Fulfilling our vision leads to a more blissful life. At the same time we have other smaller purposes that assist in accomplishing goals leading us along our path. Dreaming, meditating, visioning and visualizing are examples of activities resulting in the alignment of our lives, thereby moving closer to achieving our bliss.

One way we can accomplish this is to do whatever it is we are doing for the purpose of pleasing ourselves. Does this sound selfish? It is not. I’m not suggesting that we give up our responsibilities, do only for ourselves or stop loving other people. Keeping clear about our vision means in part that it must be something we can personally commit to doing. If we do not enjoy what we are doing it is unlikely we will be very happy. It is also highly doubtful we will succeed in fulfilling our commitments to others or ourselves.

When Oprah asked Iyanla Vanzant if putting oneself first was selfish, here's what she answered: “No, it's self-full,” says Iyanla. “It's self-full to be first, to be as good as possible to you. To take care of you, keep you whole and healthy. That doesn't mean you disregard everything and everyone. But you want to come with your cup full. You know: 'My cup runneth over.' What comes out of the cup is for y'all. What's in the cup is mine. But I've got to keep my cup full.”

The other part is our belief in the purpose of our vision. Anything, or anyone, which does not support my vision, has no place in my life. At least twice a year I clean out my contact and mailing lists. The following exercise will free you in ways you cannot even imagine. It will also push some major buttons. Funny things about the buttons we get pushed. The people that push our buttons, or in this case an activity that might do that, didn't install the buttons. We did.

Exercise #1 – Contact List Housecleaning

Start with the contact list in the email program you use most. This may be a week-long project if you have several email accounts, so take it one step at a time. Set aside 15 or 20 minutes and then stop so it doesn't become overwhelming.

If you can title your list you might use something like, "By Invitation Only." If that's not possible then keep a mental attitude that you are including only information for people who support you and your vision.

Continue this process *at least* once a year. I do it twice a year – once during my birthday month (May) and once before the end of the earth's annual cycle (October 31). For me it's a great way to begin my next birthday year or the next 12-month earth cycle, fresh and new!

It's not an easy task and you may discover more than a quandary or two in the process. You will find some people you *wish* would support you and your vision, but they do not. Why are they in your life? Some might be there for the glorious purpose of reflecting your own self-doubts. If some people are on another path then let them go their own way. Sometimes they may need to leave us, or we need to leave them, for a period of time. It may only be weeks or months. It might be years. It might be for the rest of this lifetime. Life is eternal and you *will* re-enter each other's lives if and when you need to do so.

There may be family or business associates with whom you do not spend a great deal, if any, personal time. Again, if having them in your life serves a purpose for the fulfillment of your vision, retain them. If someone is not contributing to your happiness then there are questions you must ask yourself that you alone can answer.

The same non-attachment we must practice with our possessions must be practiced with people. It does not mean we do not love them. It means we love them enough to allow them to chart their own course. It means we love ourselves enough to live our vision. People in our lives may very well have the potential to support us or be supported by us.

Just remember,

You cannot have a relationship with someone's potential.

God knows I have tried that many times in my life and I'm here to tell you it wasn't pretty! It's much like trying to teach a pig to sing. It wastes your time and it annoys the pig.

Here are some other ideas for keeping your life on purpose:

Make lists of goals – Create those goal lists chronologically: daily goals; one-, three- and six-month goals; one-, three-, five- and ten-year plans

Visualize specific goals as being already accomplished – Do this daily. This is so simple and so effective.

Dare to dream

Give life to those hopes, dreams and goals

Does this seem like a lot of work? It should. It is. No one said being successful was easy. Simple? Yes. Easy? It probably is not for most of us. The simple part is that we must be persistent in our efforts for success. Persistence in sticking to our purpose for living is vital to success. The amount of work required is not a burden since we are doing what we want to do in the pursuit or expression of our happiness.

For us to be on purpose we must see clearly and write about our vision every day. We should talk about our vision, though not necessarily to other people. In Matthew 6:6, Jesus told his followers to pray in their private room, or

“closet” as some translations render that passage, meaning in the privacy of their own thoughts. If we choose to share private, personal goals and dreams with others it had better be with like-minded people who will support us in those precious desires.

Staying on purpose with our vision creates results in our lives. Most people do not have a vision, nor are they willing to commit to the course of action which will change their lives for the better. They are the same people who will be quick to criticize our guaranteed success, as well as do their best to dash to pieces our hopes, dreams and goals. Be willing to make that mistake at least once. I can assure you it will be a growth experience. Do not make it again, at least not with the same person. To do so can harm you and your ability to express who you are.

Consistent persistence requires constant vigilance on our parts. It is important that we all have a strong support system. Friends and family can be there for us, as we can be for them. Support can be as simple as that knowing smile over a cup of coffee, or a hug that says it will all be okay sooner than we think, or when things are not going exactly the way we think they should. A therapist, coach or counselor coupled with a spiritual guide (mentor, prayer practitioner or minister) becomes a powerful aid in helping us remember who we are.

Sticking with the same people year after year develops the history that is so dynamic when times are rough. When I need to hear it, my prayer practitioner reminds me of where I *used* to be. It is empowering to have her remind me of the problems I have overcome in the past. She never allows me to see myself as anything less than magnificent, usually at a time when I am seeing myself somewhat differently.

Clarity of purpose and the desire to stay on purpose will allow happiness to blossom and grow in your life. A major step in clarifying our purpose is to understand our intention about any endeavor. What may appear to be our intention might be very different than the actual reason we end up doing something. The and last lesson will assist you in establishing a *Clear Intention* in your life.

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