



Putting the Practice into Social Action: *An Interview with Emanuel Kuntzelman on Following Your Purpose*

For much of your life, you've engaged in social action. What ITP practices do you use to stay energized in your efforts?

I really rely on meditation and more often, I use frequent but shorter meditations. When I find myself getting stressed out or agitated, I'll sit for five minutes to compose myself and regroup.

I also use elements of the Kata almost on a daily basis. It's rare that I'll do a full Kata in its specific order, but I will do parts of the Kata that spontaneously come to me. If I've been at my desk for long amounts of time, I'll usually take 5-10 minutes, alongside a 5-minute meditation, to engage in whatever Kata movements arise. Usually, it's the water series. It really does help me balance and center, as well as stretch my body and relax the mind and psyche. I do this nearly every day, and sometimes a couple times of day.

What social issues are most important to you and how are you taking action to create positive changes within those areas?

The three social issues that I care deeply about are: community activation, social governance and environmentalism. These are the projects we're focusing on within our Global Purpose grants program we're launching, and why I'm facilitating the Creating Harmony ITP series a second time. Last year's course really motivated me to engage in my own social action, which is to encourage others to find their purpose and get involved. While I'm not organizing specific projects within these three categories per se, although Greenheart did focus on those elements, my sense of purpose is in spreading the word and inspiring social action. I'm more the catalytic force.

I'm also very interested in how the dynamics of community activation work, thus why we created The Purpose to the People guide. I've also been looking into a lot of other efforts in

this area, one being Pro Social, a concept by evolutionary biologist and author, David Sloan Wilson. It's about the dynamics and health of community activity and how to make a group dynamic work and stay positive. It's quite fascinating.

Last year, you participated in the Live Social Action series (now titled Creating Harmony). In what ways were you enlivened and inspired by the program?

I'm back because I saw how much good it did for me. I was as much the student as the facilitator and I want to continue this experience. Last year, as part of my "Social Action Plan" I announced I would create a large-scale event and a social action program fund. When you tell 10-15 people, who are paying to listen to you, that you have these plans all of a sudden it makes it very real that you stay good to your word. Otherwise, I might have been tempted to waver during the more challenging times I was facing.

What came from the program last year is our upcoming Purpose Earth event to be held in New York September 2020 and the start of a Global Purpose Grant program to fund projects dedicated to community activation, environmentalism and positive, social governance. This program certainly gets a lot of credit for holding me true to making things happen, and I hope it can do the same for others and their goals.

What advice would you offer anyone seeking to contribute to the global good but wasn't sure where to start?

I would say they should sign up for this course, or at least get involved and get information on where you want to co-create change. Maybe even more important is to find a support group. That is the problem Cassie Vieten, Senior Fellow at the Institute of Noetic Sciences, has identified as one of the main obstacles to transformation. You can't change the world on your own. You have to create an ecosystem around yourself to nurture what you want to do. Maybe that's your family or a few friends, or you take this course (or the hundreds out there being offered). So, the first thing to do is to find your mini tribe or find a purpose guide, but you have to reach out and get support, so you don't go at it alone.

What aspects of social change do you find are most often overlooked but critical to creating a culture with purpose?

I would say it's the implementation of your purpose. Let's be frank. The initial Flower Power revolution in the 1960s failed because it was a great thought, but people didn't put it into action.

Then the New Age approach of the 80s tended to be a little narcissistic. It was a time of going to yoga and meditating and a lot of feel good stuff for our individual selves, but not enough people took action. It was more about individual pleasure.

Personal development is fine, but if you don't do something with that growth then what difference does it make to anyone but yourself? If you're enlightened on a mountain top and stay on that mountain it doesn't change things.

How do you envision a culture with Purpose and what steps could each of us take to move us toward realizing that future?

The steps we can take have been what we've discussed, finding your own purpose and taking action on it. As to what that vision of that culture would be, it is simply a culture based on higher spiritual values. Basically, it's what the wisdom traditions have been telling us for thousands of years but implemented within our culture beyond religious ceremony.

These values need to be wide-spread and part of every aspect of life, particularly business and work. That's where purpose is not getting through. In these areas the materialistic paradigm is dominant, and that's the problem. The scientific reductionist view drains any meaning from and leaves us with a sole purpose to make money. Our net worth is how we rank our contribution to society.

A culture with purpose is a culture that respects, acknowledges and promotes compassion, cooperation and working together for the good of the whole. These are the values that should be the driving factors of decision making and cultural presentation in life. That is the culture I'm looking for.

Who has inspired you to step into your role as a purposeful leader?

There have been many mentors over my life that have been very helpful, first and foremost, David Tiedeman. He really was the one that brought the message home to me loud and clear that we have a life career and purpose and mission. Other important mentors have been Pak Sabuh, Ronimund **von Bissing**, and Jeffrey Hadden, my professor at Tulane University. They all who inspired me early in life before the age of 35. There have been many others since then have been important role models: Barbara Marx Hubbard, Ervin Laszlo and Michael Murphy.

Do you have a favorite quote or mantra that helps you through challenging times?

The song that sings in my heart is John Lennon's "Imagine," but I also ran across a quote from Nelson Mandela recently that sums it up: "There's no passion to be found in playing small - in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."

That is the driving message of my life. Think big, go for it all and make the most of the capabilities you have. However, I found that ambition and drive can sometimes make me overly self-critical and self-demanding. On my desk I have a card that reminds me to be gentle with myself. It reads:

"Be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars. In the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul." - Max Ehrmann

The other card on my desk simply says "Joy." It's a reminder to be joyful, happy, to have fun, to be light-hearted, otherwise this work can get too heavy and serious.

Any additional comments you'd like to make about creating cultural change and having a daily practice?

I'm very grateful for the opportunity to talk about social action within this new course, and grateful there are people that feel this program is part of their purpose. Gratitude in advance.