

Intentional Living: Everyday Essentials for Living a Life of Significance

“People who are intentional take the advice of my mentor, John Wooden: Make every day your masterpiece.” – John C. Maxwell

What action step did you commit to last week? What were the results?

INSIGHT

Directions: Take turns reading the paragraphs below. As you read, underline the ideas that capture your attention. Click [here](#) to watch the video for this lesson.

What is your motivation when you get up in the morning? If your desire is to live a life of significance, you need to approach each day as an opportunity to make a difference. How do you do that? By putting others first and taking action to add value to them. That’s what leads to significance—not social position, a title, possessions, or a big bank balance.

Selfishness and significance are incompatible. A self-centered approach to living does not bring fulfillment. However, when we put others first, not only do we help them, but it helps us, too. John C. Maxwell’s friend, motivational speaker, Zig Ziglar said, “When you help people get what they want, they will help you get what you want.” Adding value to people is a win-win situation.

The 5 Everyday Essentials of Significance

John teaches that there are five everyday essentials for living a life of significance, and they are simple practices that *anyone* can do right away:

- 1. Value People Every Day.** You will only add value to people if you see value in people. You cannot believe people are unimportant and add value to them at the same time. John learned this lesson from his father, who said, “Most people feel undervalued, insecure, and lost. If you show them that you value them and you love them unconditionally, you will make a difference.”

How do you feel when others value you? How about when people devalue you? How you are treated impacts how you feel about yourself and how you treat others. Keep that in mind as you interact with people. When you value yourself and you value others, you create a cycle of positive interaction that makes life better for everyone.

2. Think Ahead About Ways to Add Value to People Every Day. People who make a difference think about ways to add value to people ahead of time. They are proactive about it. A quick look at your day's calendar in the morning can provide ideas for adding value. Where will you be going? Who will you be meeting? In what ways might you help people? Opportunities are endless—if you are intentional in your thinking.

Recently John C. Maxwell challenged his grandchildren to think about ways to add value to others every day. His twelve-year-old grandson John took that advice. He was taking golf lessons, and at each lesson, his instructor provided a cup of water for him. One hot day, young John decided that he would provide a cup of water for his instructor instead. Young John even took a picture of it and sent it to his grandpa to show him that he was learning the lesson.

You can do something similar. As you can see, it doesn't need to be anything big or expensive. It just needs to be thoughtful. Begin your day by thinking about specific ways to add value to people.

3. Look for Ways to Add Value to People Every Day. In his book *Winning with People*, John C. Maxwell writes about the Lens Principle, which is, "Who we are determines how we see others." For example, if we are selfish, we look for others to add value to us. If we desire significance, we look for ways to add value to others. In life, you either add to or subtract from others.

Those who subtract focus on taking for themselves. Those who add focus on giving to others. As you go through your day, which mindset do you have? If you have a mindset to give, you will care about people's needs and look for ways to meet them. You will see your day as a series of opportunities to help people.

4. Do Things That Add Value to People Every Day. Is it possible to value people, think about adding value to them, and look for ways to add value to them, yet *still* not be a person of significance? Unfortunately, the answer is yes. The key to significance is taking action. You can only make a difference if you actually follow through and *do* things that add value to others. Otherwise, you only have good intentions, and good intentions don't produce results. Only intentional living does.

John C. Maxwell holds himself accountable every day by asking himself two questions. At the beginning of every day, he asks himself, "Who will I add value to today?" And at the end of every day he asks, "Who did I add value to today?" If he cannot identify a specific action done for a specific person, he knows he has not been intentional enough that day.

5. Encourage Others to Add Value to People Every Day. Significance begins with you, but it's meant to be shared. As you develop the daily habit of adding value to others, begin encouraging others close to you to do the same. You will be amazed at the impact you can make when you partner with others to make a difference.

The essentials of significance are not hard. But they do require intentionality. Embrace them, and you will feel fulfillment, make your world a better place, and begin your story of significance every day.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Choose something you underlined that is important to you. Take one minute to tell everyone what you chose and why it is important to you.

ANSWER THIS QUESTION

Take one or two minutes to share your response to this question:

Which action do you find to be the most difficult for you? Why?

Placing a High Value on People Every Day

Thinking Ahead about Ways to Add Value to People Every Day

Looking for Ways to Add Value to People Every Day

Doing Things to Add Value to People Every Day

Encouraging Others to Add Value to People Every Day

INTENTIONAL ACTION STEP

What specific action can you take this week to intentionally add value to someone you normally do not help? Write down what that action is. Be sure to include who, what, where, how, and when you will take this action.

Take a minute to share with the group what action you intend to take this week.