

Intentional Living: Putting Your Purpose into Action

“There are two great days in your life: The day you were born and the day you find out why.” – 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.

There is a passage in the book *Souls on Fire* in which author Elie Wiesel writes that when you die and meet your Maker, you’re not going to be asked why you didn’t become a Messiah or find a cure for cancer. All you’re going to be asked is, “Why didn’t you become you? Why didn’t you become all that you are?”

What does it mean to become all that you are? It means reaching your potential. How do you do that? By fulfilling your purpose. But before you live your purpose, you must first find it.

Many people find that task to be challenging. But John C. Maxwell offers a simple formula that anyone can use to find his purpose:

Your Passion + Your Strengths + Value Added to Others = Your Purpose

John says that when you add what you *love* doing to what you’re *good* at doing, and you use those things to meet the needs of others, you find your purpose.

You can begin discovering your purpose today. Start by asking yourself these three questions:

What Is My Passion?

When John C. Maxwell was eighteen years old, he heard a professor list three questions that a person can ask to find his or her purpose. John has used these questions to help guide him toward his purpose for fifty years. Here are the questions, along with John’s answers:

What do you cry about? John cries when he sees hurting people.

What do you sing about? John sings when he is helping people.

What do you dream about? John dreams of helping people to help other people.

To find your passion—the thing you love to do—ask yourself those same questions. Your answers will point you toward your purpose.

As you think about your answers, consider this: Your passion will give you energy. It will give you drive. It will make you want to get up in the morning, and it will put bounce in your step. Your passion will inspire you to want more, do more, be more.

What Are My Strengths?

Everyone has qualities, talents, and skills that have the potential to make a difference. John C. Maxwell says that he knew from an early age that his greatest strength was communication. He was also aware of his gift for leadership. When he started communicating about leadership, he started to realize, *I was made for this!* And his ability to add value to people went to another level.

Your talents give you a superior edge. They open up opportunities for you. These things give you an advantage, but they bring with them responsibility. You have been given gifts and talents, to help not only yourself, but also others.

What is inside you that can help you make others better? What skills do you possess? What talents are in you? What personality traits do you have that can be used to add value to others? Anything and everything you have can be used to help others if you make adding value to people your priority and become intentional about it.

What Needs Can I Meet?

Our world is filled with needs waiting to be met by someone. You can be that someone!

John C. Maxwell says he looks at his schedule every day and asks himself, "Who can I help today? How can I help them? When should I do that?" You can do that same thing. You can also act in the moment, putting your unique skills, talents, resources, and experiences to work to help others.

Look around you with open eyes, and you will see needs everywhere. Begin by looking for physical needs: everyone needs water, food, shelter, and clothing. Can you use your strengths to meet these kinds of needs in people? These are the most basic things.

From there, go out of your way to help people with their emotional needs, such as the need that everyone has to feel valued. Will you value them? Everyone wants to belong. Will you include them? Everyone wants people to believe in them. Will you give them your belief?

Finally, everyone can benefit by being given opportunities. What can you do for others that they cannot do for themselves? Can you introduce people to one another for their mutual benefit? Is there an opportunity that may not be right for you that you could pass along to someone else? Or perhaps you can invite someone to join you in something you're doing. Most people just want a chance to work for a better life. If you can, give them that chance.

Purpose becomes clearer when you put together all three of these elements. When you love doing something, but it doesn't use your strengths, it may become your hobby, but it won't lead to your purpose. If something uses your strengths, but it doesn't tap into your passion, you won't keep doing it. But when your passion and your strengths align, and they are used to satisfy others' needs, something special happens. You discover your purpose, you make a difference, and you climb higher up the mountain of significance.

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:

How could you bring together what you're passionate about and your greatest strengths in order to meet the needs of others and add value to them?

INTENTIONAL ACTION STEP

This week, write down your answers to these three questions: What are your top two strengths? What do you love doing? What needs of others might you be able to meet by using them? Then meet separately with three people who know you well. Tell them that you want their opinion about your answers to the three questions. Do they agree with your answers about yourself, or do they see greater strengths and greater passions than the ones you listed? And do they have additional ideas about how you could use your strengths and passion to help other people?

Take a minute to share with the group who you will talk to about your strengths and passions.

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