

A heart-shaped sun is positioned in the upper center of the image, glowing brightly against a dark orange and red sky. The sun's light reflects on the dark water below, creating a shimmering path that leads towards the horizon. The overall mood is serene and inspirational.

**Living a Courageously
Authentic Life**

**Lesson Four:
Determine Your Life Purpose**

Lesson 4: Determine Your Life Purpose

“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.”

~Pablo Picasso

**Why am I here? What am I supposed to do with my life?
What will give me the most joy and fulfillment?**

Many of us ask questions similar to these at some point in our life, and coming up with an answer can be challenging. It is easy to get so bogged down with day-to-day living that we lose sight of the bigger purpose of our being. But once you know your gifts, you can then start to define your life purpose.

Your life purpose combines your gifts and passions into one clear focus. What I've found through my own and through client work is that our life purpose is directional but does not tell us exactly what to do. Our life purpose can be lived in so many different ways, and those ways can change as we go through life.

Living an authentic life requires you to bring your purpose to light. You may start with a small step, but ultimately your authentic life demands that you live your purpose everyday. When we are living out of purpose, our lives tend to feel as if they have no meaning and are not impacting the world. We wake up in the morning feeling numb or even dreading the workday that faces us, and often count down the days until the weekend so we can do something that brings us joy.

What's interesting is that it doesn't always require a job change to begin to live our purpose. Often there are ways we can live our purpose within the structure of the work we are doing. Sometimes a simple role change or internal transfer can make a world of a difference.

When we are aligned with our purpose, we feel more joyful, purposeful and passionate about each day.

Case story: Determining Your Life Purpose

For the client in Lesson 3 that was considering a career move, we then looked more closely at her gifts and passions. As we talked about what these words meant to her and how she lived them today and in the past, her life purpose became clear: to help

empower other women to come into their own. As soon as we spoke the words, my client knew in her heart that this was her life purpose.

The ways to help empower other women are numerous: she could serve as a mentor, she could set up or work for a non-profit focused on helping women, she could volunteer, or she might guide her daughter or niece, for example. As she progresses on her life journey, she might find there are times and situations that demand more of her gifts than others. Other times may require less effort on her behalf.

Armed with this information, she began to bring her purpose and gifts to her existing job and helped her female coworkers in such a way that they were feeling more empowered and she was feeling more joyful about going to her job.

Taking Action

Set aside a couple hours (all at once or in smaller time blocks) and find a quiet place to respond to the following questions.

- 1) Identify potential life purpose statements, using some or all of the suggestions below.
 - a) Figure out what you love doing. Make a list of the things that you do that bring you joy or invigorate you. What activities cause you to lose track of time or forget to eat? What did you love to do when you were a kid?
 - b) Think about what you would want for the world. If you could give one thing (either tangible or intangible) to every person in the world, what would that be? Why is that one thing important to you? How does it help others?
 - c) Identify your best moments. Looking back over your life, what are the moments where you felt the best or were the most proud? What were you doing? How did it make you feel?
 - d) Look at your list of gifts and talents. Make a list of how you would like to use them in the world. Be as specific as possible.
 - e) Ask for insights from a higher power. Our guides want to help us, but they wait for us to ask. Here are a couple suggestion on how you can get help from your guides:
 - i) Channel their messages through free-form writing. Write the question you would like answered, and then pause. Clear your mind, and ask your guides for help answering the question. Without thinking, begin writing the words that appear in your mind. Don't stop to analyze what is being written; instead, let the words flow out and through you. When you are done writing, you can go back and read what you wrote.

- ii) Ask for signs. In the morning, ask your guides to show you signs or examples of what your life purpose is. As you go about your day, pay attention to anything that pops out at you – it could be an ad on the side of a bus, or a word that comes up in multiple conversations with co-workers, a specific animal, or a song that you hear – and make a note of it.
 - iii) Let your dreams show you. As you are going to sleep, ask your guides to give you insights about your life purpose through your dreams as you sleep. Keep a pen and paper by the bed and write down your dreams immediately upon waking up. Review your dream for insights on your life purpose. If you don't typically remember your dreams, ask your guides to help you remember them!
 - f) Work with a shaman or other intuitive to get more insights on your life purpose.
- 2) Once you have a list of potential life purpose statements, spend time with each concept. Read them aloud. Visualize yourself doing those things. Which ones make your heart sing and make you feel excited? Put those in one pile. The ones that don't, put in another pile. Review the ones in the "heart sing" pile. Which one(s) appeal to your heart more and give you energy?
- 3) Write your life purpose statement based on the statements that make you feel the most energized.
- 4) If you have some close friends or family members who will listen with an open heart (and not judge or try to change your mind), read them your life purpose statement and ask them if they see those qualities in you.

Congratulations on completing Lesson 4! What special thing can you do for yourself to honor and reward yourself for the work you've done?