

Richard J. Leider

Coauthor of the bestselling *Repacking Your Bags*

The Power *of* Purpose

Find Meaning,
Live Longer,
Better

3RD EDITION
Revised & Expanded

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Purpose



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BK

Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
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The Power of Purpose

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PREFACE

Why Do You Get Up in the Morning?



Your purpose.

Your aim or direction.

Your reason for being.

Your reason for getting up in the morning.

You may not have considered the first three items, but most of us have wondered about a reason to get up in the morning, at least occasionally. *The Power of Purpose, Third Edition*, is about that reason: to help you unlock the power of purpose in your life.

What Is Purpose?

Our purpose is the essence of who we are and what makes us unique.

Our purpose is an active expression of the deepest dimension within us—where we have a profound sense of who we are and why we're here.

Purpose is the aim around which we structure our lives, a source of direction and energy. Through the lens of purpose, we are able to see ourselves—and our future—more clearly.

You have a purpose no matter what age you are,

how healthy you are, or what your economic or social situation is. Your purpose is the reason you were born, and it can be what gets you out of bed in the morning.

Purpose is actively living your values, leaning toward compassion for others, and getting up in the morning to contribute value to the world.

Purpose is what gives life a meaning.

What Is the Power in Purpose?

Power is the other key word in the book's title that needs attention. Webster's Dictionary defines power as the "ability to do, act, or produce." Only certain kinds of purpose have the potential to be empowering, so being deliberate about identifying our purpose is essential. What determines the power in purpose, ultimately, is the worthiness of the aim. Having purpose that provides real power requires an aim outside ourselves. Only when our purpose is larger than ourselves can meaning be deeply savored and long lasting, not just a goal completed and then forgotten.

At our very core we need to matter. We need evidence to believe that we are growing and are giving—becoming the best we can be. Naming our purpose helps us satisfy a basic need that we're being used for a purpose that we recognize as worthy.

Many of us say we don't have enough time to take care of our careers and our lives. Then before we know it, we're right! We are so busy trying to survive in an

increasingly complex world that we don't have time to notice time passing. We do many things to answer the question *Why do I get up in the morning?* However, our busyness can also be a way of avoiding the question. In addition, it is an anxious way of living that can lead to unease and psychological and physical problems. And finally, we might end up asking, *What have I done with my life?*

How Do You Unlock It?

There is a better way. Having a reason to get up in the morning can add not only years to your life, but also life to your years!

Finding that reason is not easy. If it were, we'd all know exactly why we're here and be living that purpose every minute of every day. However, my experience shows that when you unlock a clear sense of who you are, everything else follows naturally.

Some people will come to the purpose quest with a natural bent toward reflection. Others will find the process uncomfortable, or unnatural. A few will just roll their eyes. The key to engaging both the seekers and the skeptics is to offer a step-by-step practical guidance process. And, that's what this book offers to you.

If you are looking for a reason to get up in the morning or asking questions such as these, this book is for you:

- I feel that I've missed my calling in life. How do I find it?

- I've successfully reached midlife. Is that all there is? What's next?
- I've been growing spiritually. How do I connect my spiritual growth with my work?
- I'm in a major transition (graduation, marriage, new job or job loss, divorce, illness, death of a loved one). How do I find meaning and direction?
- I have enough outer success. How do I find inner fulfillment?

This book was developed by interviewing older adults about such deep questions, then combining their wisdom with my studies in the fields of adult development and counseling psychology. Specifically, I asked a cross-section of older adults this question: "If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently?"

Three themes wove their way through all the interviews. The respondents consistently said they would be

- more reflective,
- more courageous,
- clear earlier about purpose.

From these interviews, I concluded that purpose naturally resides deep inside the human soul. All people seem to have a natural desire and capacity to contribute somehow to life. Each of us wants to leave footprints. And each of us has a unique purpose. Each of us is an experiment of one. We can learn from, but not adopt

the purpose of, another person; we must unlock our own. Each of us is on a lifelong quest to find our purpose, whether we are consciously pursuing the quest or are vaguely aware that something is missing.

The quest for unlocking your purpose begins with believing you have one. No book, of course, can convince you of this. You must arrive at your own decision. But, the process works if you work the process. And, many people today are doing just that. Unlocking your purpose is not a single revelation; it is a process that must be experienced.

What Is the Purpose Movement?

Over the past decade, there's been an explosion of the interest in purpose. Psychologists describe it as the pathway to happiness. Scientists point to it as essential to brain health and well-being. Business experts make the case that purpose is a key to exceptional productivity and organizational credibility, and medical professionals have found that people with purpose in their lives are less prone to disease and even live longer.

Throughout history, humans have sought to make sense of their lives, searching for meaning through prayer, retreat, art, music, nature, community, gratitude, forgiveness, and multiple other ways. Traditionally, purpose was connected with the spiritual aspect of people's lives, and healers, priests, and shamans were the ministers who helped people connect with the sacred to restore bodies and souls to health and wholeness. Now science is

increasingly validating what people have known all along: that purpose is fundamental. When it comes to life's inevitable breakdowns, purpose can provide a breakthrough. Purpose can give us the will to live. Without purpose, we can die. With purpose, we can live in dignity and compassion. Purpose is the one thing that cannot be taken from us.

Indeed, I believe that the process of unlocking your purpose and finding the courage to live it—what I call the power of purpose—is the single most important developmental task we can undertake today.

The twenty-first century shift to an accelerated, global, technology-driven world is driving a purpose movement. Such periods tend to spotlight what does not change—what remains constant and nonnegotiable in our lives. Purpose is one of those constants. People of all ages are seeking a new perspective on how they fit into this changing world. We are challenged to find relevant answers to the age-old questions of purpose and meaning. In this era, purpose has the marks of a movement—an inner-directed quest. We could say that we are living in the Purpose Age.

In addition, many of us have come to acknowledge publicly what we privately knew all along: that surviving adolescence and early adulthood did not ensure a tranquil, jolt-free passage through the rest of our careers and lives. We change; our priorities and values shift; confidence grows, dissolves into doubt, returns; relationships evolve, break apart, reform; careers and life-

styles lose energy or take on new interest—all forming a complex life cycle. Thus, purpose is not discovered once and then we are done with it. It is reimagined at various points throughout the life cycle, typically during crises and major life transitions.

Welcome to the Third Edition

The Third Edition is different. Here's why. As a lifelong student of purpose, I've kept learning and growing. The insights in this book have grown along with me. The lessons learned have come from study, practice, and stories from past readers. Like a good school or teacher, we can return to a good book over and over for lifelong learning. Like most of us, the purpose story has grown and matured. And, parts of the story have stayed the same.

I initially chose to write this book because of my deep personal belief that we live in an evolving spiritual world and that every individual in this world has unique gifts and a purpose to use those gifts to contribute value to the world.

This book builds on earlier editions of *The Power of Purpose*, expanding and deepening the conversation. It is based on forty years of study and experiences with people of all ages who were engaged in the purpose quest. New stories about purpose have been added, and other material has been updated. In addition, the Resources at the back of the book have been updated for the many people who asked me how to use the book

in seminars, classes, book clubs, and spiritual or study groups.

The book is organized in a way that makes sense to me, but everyone has different needs and interests, so you should feel free to follow any order you want.

I believe that spirit touches and moves our lives through the purpose journey. That is my starting point for helping people to unlock their purpose. In a pluralistic society, not everyone will agree with that starting point. That's all right. Let me be clear, however, that my objective is not intended to express a specific religious point of view or to exclude people who don't believe as I do. Instead, this starting point is the very reason for my acceptance of the many differences among people. Because of my starting point, I believe that each person has a spiritual reason for being and that our world is incomplete until each one unlocks her or his purpose.

I hope you will find your purpose—if I have found mine, this book will be a catalyst for you finding yours.

Richard J. Leider
Minneapolis, Minnesota

PART I

What Is Your Purpose?



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The Purpose Checkup



I was just trying to get home from work.

ROSA PARKS

What is your purpose? We all have a unique gift and were put on this earth to share it. What is yours?

The first step toward unlocking your purpose is to mine your life story for major threads and themes that reveal your lifelong gifts, passions, and values. Next, create a clear purpose statement that energizes you to get up each morning with intention and joy. The words in your purpose statement must be yours. They must capture your essence. And they must call you to action each and every day. You must envision the impact you'll have on your world as a result of living your purpose. Your actions—not your words—are, ultimately, what truly matters.

To do this, let's begin with a Purpose Checkup. Many of us accept the wisdom of regular physical checkups. We're also generally willing to review our financial situation with some regularity.

So, if money and medical checkups are essential, we might be wise to take guidance from the financial

and medical worlds and adopt the practice of a regular meaning checkup on that third dimension to ensure that our spirit—our sense of purpose—remains healthy.

The Purpose Checkup

Take a moment, now, and complete the Purpose Checkup (in the Resource section at the end of the book). Use this checkup to check in with yourself yearly, perhaps on your birthday!

Purpose is essential to our well-being. It is what makes us human. Purpose is not only what makes us human, it gives us the will to live or to persevere. It gives us a reason to get up in the morning. Purpose is fundamental to our health, healing, happiness, and longevity.

Purpose is one of the chief requisites for a well-lived life. A constant in the lives of people who experience a sense of well-being are the moments of meaning—the “purpose moments.” This chapter shows the importance of purpose moments and helps you to recognize and create such moments in your own life.

The Power of Purpose Moments

Most of us want to know there is a purpose to life—that our being here does mean something and that what we do matters. Most of us want our lives to matter, and we want to live intentionally.

Rosa Parks had a purpose moment that ultimately changed a nation. She was arrested for refusing to give

up her bus seat to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955. This single act of intention sparked a bus boycott that led to the integration of Alabama's bus system and paved the way for the civil rights movement in the United States.

Meaning matters. The search for meaning is basic to us all. However, we often examine it only when some crisis forces us to confront it—an arrest, an illness, a death, a divorce, or a loss of job. We take life for granted until a crisis wakes us up and forces us to ask the big questions. Crisis is a catalyst for purpose moments. And purpose moments bring us face-to-face with the big questions, such as *What am I meant to do here?*

Flight 427 was scheduled to depart Chicago's O'Hare Airport at 4:50 p.m. on a hectic Friday afternoon. Bill was on his way to Pittsburgh to attend his first meeting of the executive committee of a college board of trustees. Just before flight time, above the din of a busy O'Hare, Bill heard a page that asked him to check with the nearest gate agent. He was instructed to call his office immediately, where he learned that his meeting had been canceled—the first such cancellation in eleven years!

Shortly before Flight 427 was to begin boarding, Bill turned in his boarding pass and made a quick exit to another concourse, where his assistant, Nancy, had booked him on a flight back to his hometown of Atlanta. When he called his wife, Valerie, on his mobile phone from his car on the way home, he was greeted by an outburst of tears and raw emotion. "Bill," she

sobbed, “You haven’t heard! The plane you were supposed to be on to Pittsburgh crashed short of the airport and no one survived.”

Bill was stunned. Of that purpose moment on the freeway, he said, “There was only this amazing calm, a sense of peace that settled over me and affirmed that God was holding me in the palm of His hand.” He arrived home to tears of joy and hugs that didn’t want to quit, while the television brought the bitter details of Flight 427 into their living room. “I know my reprieve is temporary. My life has been extended for now.”

Bill believes that God had something more for him to do with his life. On Monday after his narrow escape, he got a hint of what that purpose might be. At his insurance agency, where he was managing director, he was besieged by friends, staff, and agents, all expressing gratitude for his role in their lives. Bill was already the leader of one of the largest, most successful insurance agencies in the country, but at that moment he realized that his true purpose, from here on, was to “grow values-driven people.” That became the purpose of his life and agency. Bill no longer postponed those purpose moments but focused his newly precious time on coaching people to live in alignment with their values.

A Whole Life

Our well-being and quality of life depend on finding greater wholeness in life. The words health, heal, whole, and holy all derive from the same root. This reveals the

obvious fact that to grow whole is not just a challenge of money and health, but a challenge of meaning as well.

Having a purpose in life—a clear reason to get up in the morning—is essential to growing whole. Imagine that you’ve decided to conduct your own personal survey by asking a handful of your friends, What is a life purpose? What do you guess the most common answer might be? Would it be similar to your own response or quite different?

At first glance, it might seem like the answer to the question is so obvious that it’s a waste of your time to even ask it. Don’t be fooled, however. There is wisdom in revisiting the questions that we think we already know how to answer. Our answers change at different phases of our lives and with changing life circumstances.

I’ve dedicated my professional life to exploring that single question. Consequently, I’ve had the privilege of asking thousands of people that question and many others. I’ve discovered that the majority of people define life purpose in a similar way. They may use different words, but the common thread weaving through their responses is this: “A life purpose is what I’m meant to do and be with my whole life.”

Living a Life Worth Living

So, what is your purpose? Whether we explore this question publicly or privately, it is vital to our health, healing, wholeness, and our holiness that we do examine the question. Because what ultimately shapes our

lives are the questions we ask, fail to ask, or never dream of asking. It is our questions that shape our humanity.

If we had to name what makes life worth living, what gives it meaning and purpose, most of us would probably say it's the people we love. Relationships, along with work, are the core differences in quality of life at all ages. Whom we love and how we love them are in a way the fundamental reasons we get up in the morning.

Yet the number-one issue in many people's lives today is isolation. A sense of aloneness—a strong feeling of isolation or going it alone—affects almost half of us. We complain that we either want more time for friends or would like to have more true friends, versus acquaintances, because busy lives can result in an abundance of acquaintances and a poverty of true friends.

We can easily fill our lives with busyness. There is always more to be done, always a way to keep from staring into the mirror. If we're not careful, we can begin to mistake our busyness for meaning, turning our lives into a checklist of to-dos that can occupy all the waking hours of our days and leave us breathless, with our feeling of friendship left incomplete.

And always there is more to do. Our to-do lists will outlive us. The labors of our lives will be endless. For every person who summons up the focus and energy to step out on the purpose quest, there are many more who plod on, waiting—waiting for some magical, easy solution to their quest, waiting to live the life they yearn for, a life that matters.

Discovering What Matters

The Met Life Mature Market Institute (MMI) applied sophisticated market research to the question of purpose. The MMI team worked closely with me and used my purpose work as a foundation for the purpose model in this study. The study, titled *Discovering What Matters*, explored with a researcher's eye for precision the way people prioritize their lives as they face transitions. This marriage of measurement to meaning produced unique, measurable evidence about the role purpose plays in people's lives. It revealed that regardless of age, gender, financial status, or life phase, the majority of people assign the most importance to meaning-related activities and, above all else, spending time with friends and family.

People with a sense of purpose in their lives were more likely to report being “happy” and to describe themselves as living the “good life.” Having a sense of purpose was related to possessing both a “focus” on essential things today, and a “vision” of the future they wanted to enjoy.

The study showed that the concept of purpose, even the word itself, is something held in high regard by many, perhaps even most people. Some described purpose as giving them a general direction for their lives, while others even went so far as to allow it to prioritize the key choices required in their day-to-day living. And yet, many of the respondents might have found it difficult to honestly point to how they would use purpose in the daily choices they make.

But is purpose merely a luxury that is nice to have, or a more powerful fundamental concept? Responses revealed that purpose was the differentiator between those who reported living the “good life” and those not living the good life. Eighty-four percent of those who felt their lives had purpose reported that they were living the good life.

Build-Your-Own Life

A build-your-own trade-off exercise was used to assess people’s expectations of what their lives would be like with respect to activities five years in the future. They were given a set number of “life points” to distribute among a range of activities in four categories: money, medicine, meaning, and place. Consistent with results from other parts of the study, respondents across all age groups allocated the most life points to meaning-related activities—that is, being with friends and family—with older respondents (aged sixty-five to seventy-four) focusing the most time on meaning-related activities.

It is clear from this research that the pursuit of meaning and purpose in our lives is fundamental, and that the older people are, the more important living with meaning and purpose becomes. While there are certainly some differences among age, income, and asset levels, the consistent message from this research is that the circumstances that truly bring a sense of well-being to life are fairly universal.¹

Everyone Else Has a Purpose. So What's Mine?

An entertaining evocation of this purpose research is the musical *Avenue Q*, which is the twenty-first longest-running show in Broadway history and has won several Tony Awards, including the award for best musical. The show has also spawned other productions around the globe, including the one I experienced at the Gielgud Theatre in London.

The show is largely inspired by (and is in the style of) *Sesame Street*. Most of the characters in the show are puppets operated by actors onstage; the set depicts several tenements on a rundown street in an outer borough of New York City. However, the characters are in their twenties and thirties and face adult problems instead of those faced by preschoolers, thus making the show more suited for the adults who grew up with *Sesame Street*. A recurring theme is the central character's search for his elusive "purpose."

I sat enthralled as the song *Purpose* was sung. The core message—everyone else has a purpose, so, what's mine?—brought forth murmurs from the strangers sitting around me, as they chuckled over the lyrics, such as "Purpose, it's the little flame that lights a fire under your ass./Purpose, it's like driving a car with a full tank of gas," and others. I left the theater that night feeling affirmed that purpose had truly arrived on the public stage. From shows in London and New York, from youngsters and oldsters, the ever-elusive purpose-in-life

theme was finally on the marquee. *Avenue Q* was a purpose moment for me.

Purpose helps us understand what is core to our life, what we care about in our actual day-to-day living. Our world suddenly comes to life.

The Most Memorable Mentor I Ever Met

One person who had a profound purpose-moment effect on my life was Dr. Richard Gustavovich Reusch, my college advisor. On the first day of class of my first day at college, a short, bald man walked in dressed in a green and tan checked sport coat over a maroon vest, black tie, British cavalry twill trousers, and well-shined cordovan shoes. He was not what I expected! He silently looked the class over as if he were a drill sergeant assessing new recruits. He then began class, speaking in a heavy accent. To this day, I can cite stories from his “world religions” lectures verbatim.

Dr. Reusch required students to pick up their exams in his office so he could check in with each one. More than test grades were the subject of discussions in his office, however. At the end of my first semester of college, in danger of flunking out, I went to talk to Dr. Reusch after final exams. I can still smell the pipe smoke and picture his office, where he was surrounded by African artifacts collected in his forty years of calling as a “Maa-sai missionary” in Tanzania. He was the best story teller I’d ever heard.

“I’m really lost,” I told him. “I want to stay here, but I’ve really screwed up my life. What should I do?”

Dr. Reusch was unlike any other professor on campus. His compassion changed my life. He didn't ask about my courses but simply asked me to tell him something about myself. "About myself?" No other professor had ever asked me that! A magical hour later, I left his office with a new sense of what I wanted in school and in life. Somehow, Dr. Reusch made the hour almost a spiritual experience, and I felt something special was intended for my life.

Twenty years later I traveled to Tanzania and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. I was astonished to learn that the crater at the summit is named Reusch Crater. Dr. Reusch climbed Mount Kilimanjaro sixty-five times, helped to establish its exact altitude, and discovered the crater now officially named after him. He knew twenty languages and he wrote books on religion, history, and geography in German, English, and Swahili.

After learning about Reusch Crater, I went back to Tanzania to find out more about Dr. Reusch. Upon interviewing people who knew him, I was amazed to learn that his life story read like Lawrence of Arabia. He was an Oriental scholar, university professor, Lutheran pastor, political refugee, East African missionary, mountaineer, ethnographer, spy, linguist, historian, and "honorary Maasai warrior!" Suddenly, I realized that my advisor had sparked the interest of reporters in the world beyond our campus. He was, in fact, memorable. Dr. Reusch came to Minnesota and taught college courses in church history, comparative religion, and fencing. His archive files are stuffed with letters of

appreciation from young people like me, from parents of students, and from Maasai leaders in Tanzania, who said, “Come, please, and help us again.”

He concluded his ministry of service at a small, rural church. Two weeks before he died, he announced his resignation date. That date became the occasion of his funeral.

Dr. Reusch used to say that a miracle occurred when a need and a solution converged. That day in his office I witnessed a miracle, thanks to a life memorably lived. He was one of the most purposeful people I have ever crossed paths with. His purpose was “Loyalty is what counts in life!” It was shaped by the book of Revelation: “Be you loyal unto death and I will give you the crown of life.”

Purpose is the recognition of the “loyalty in life.” Purpose defines our legacy. And, his was evident. It may find expression through family, community, relationship, work, and spiritual activities. We receive from life what we are loyal to.

Look ahead. How old do you think you’ll live to be? Imagine you’re that age. As you look back on your life, what would you like to be able to say is your legacy? How did you become the person you were destined to be? What might you do to create purpose moments so that you can look back over your life with “loyalty?”

CHAPTER 2

The Purpose Myths



Service is the rent we pay for living. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time.

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

“Let Life Question You!”

Viktor Frankl, Holocaust survivor, therapist, and author of *Man’s Search for Meaning*, was another person who profoundly impacted my life. Frankl noted that many of us are questioning life, and suggested instead, “Let life question you!” We ask: What has life done for me? Will things go my way today? What’s in it for me? However, there is a more powerful wisdom in reversing the questioning and letting life question us. An openness to being questioned by life is a way to unlock our purpose. It is often in the midst of profound purpose moments that we pull back from the entanglements of daily survival and let life question us. The benefit of a crisis is often the letting go of petty concerns, conflicts, and the need for control and the realization that life is short and every moment precious.

Cancer therapists Carl and Stephanie Simonton give their patients this advice:

You must stop and reassess your priorities and values. You must be willing to be yourself, not what people want you to be because you think that is the only way you can get love. You can no longer be dishonest. You are now at a point where, if you truly want to live, you have to be who you are.²

Could there be any better advice for us?

Whenever we are confronted with a purpose moment, such as cancer or a fate that is unavoidable, we are given the choice to let life question us. What matters is the attitude we take toward the situation. This chapter will help you learn to let life question you.

A Marathon of Hope

A sense of purpose is rarely handed to us. We get it by choosing it, by choosing to say, “Yes, I matter; I want my life to matter.” Because a sense of purpose comes from within, only we know if we have it. Only we are aware if something in our life makes us want to get up in the morning.

Terry Fox³ is a clear example. For this young Canadian, the necessity to unlock his purpose was thrust upon him early in life. Two days after his eighteenth birthday, Terry learned he had a cancerous tumor in his right knee. His leg would have to be amputated immediately because the cancer could spread through the rest of his body. Suddenly, life was tentative, no longer to be taken for granted. Despite the shock and the speed with which

Terry's life had changed, he spent little time in the trap of self-pity. Within the confines of his hospital room, Terry detected a purpose moment, his personal reason to live.

Many of us will be forced to reflect upon the reason for our existence when we experience severe crises. But as Terry Fox put it, "You don't have to do like I did—wait until you lose a leg or get some awful disease—before you can take the time to find out what kind of stuff you're made of. Start now. Anybody can."

Two weeks after his surgery, Terry began chemotherapy. The cancer clinic and the painful treatments were a reminder to Terry that almost half of all cancer patients never recover. He began to detect what he cared deeply about, what moved him. He decided to do something for the people who were still in the hospital. Terry began to unlock a new sense of purpose, which crystallized into a specific project: He would run all the way across Canada to raise one million dollars to fight cancer and would give the money to the Canadian Cancer Society.

The power of purpose had transformed an average athlete into a person who ran a marathon a day for five months with an artificial leg! After completing three-fifths of the journey across Canada, Terry Fox had to leave his Marathon of Hope. He never finished because the cancer had spread to his lungs. But by the time of his death, one year later, he had surpassed his goal. He had raised many millions of dollars and had inspired hundreds of thousands of people. Life questioned Terry and he answered.

Terry Fox symbolized what most of us want to believe—that there is purpose to life, that our being here does mean something, that what we do does matter. The sheer determination of one individual can turn a seemingly mediocre idea into a stunning success. The lesson for us is that behind the creation of any great deed is at least one individual who was consumed by a purpose to make a difference. And the only place we can find this kind of motivation is within.

Four Purpose Myths

If you feel inclined to dismiss Terry Fox's story as bigger than life with no practical application for your own life, you may be subscribing to some commonly held myths about purpose.

It's not just the high achievers but people who achieve less dramatic successes as well—all the people in this book—who have to overcome their self-imposed doubts and other obstacles to get started when they discover what moves them. The following are four common myths that may block us from experiencing the power of purpose. As you read each one, ask yourself, Do I believe this?

Myth 1: To have purpose means I must do something completely original.

Reality: Can you think of anything that is totally new? Almost every idea or creation is an extension or builds on previous ideas. New scientific breakthroughs are

built on existing fundamental truths, often as the result of reorganizing or reapplying old concepts. As we unlock our purpose, we often need to accept this fact: At the heart, most new ideas result from borrowing, adding, combining, or modifying old ones. Like runners in a relay race, we simply carry the baton another leg of the race.

Action: The paradox of purpose is that in order to address new solutions to problems, we must first familiarize ourselves with the ideas of others to form a base for launching our own ideas. Gather as much information as you can (realizing that you'll never have enough). Make a decision. Get on with the choice to live with purpose.

Myth 2: Only a few special people have true purpose in their lives.

Reality: This is the most commonly rationalized of all myths. There is no denying that often we have relied on saints, sages, and experts to solve many of our problems. However, history is filled with extraordinary contributions made by ordinary people who had virtually no expertise in the areas where they made their mark. In fact, being a novice is often an asset because we aren't hemmed in by traditional ways of viewing a situation.

Action: Purpose appears and is powerful in proportion to the energies we expend rather than to our degree of expertise. It's the passion to make a difference that counts most, so we must ignite our passion.

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