

THE LIFE PURPOSE STATEMENT EXERCISE

From *“Practicing Radical Honesty”*

by Brad Blanton

“So the meaning of the Grail and of most myths is finding the dynamic source in your life so that its trajectory is out of your own center and not something put on you by society. Then, of course, there is the problem of coordinating your well-being with the goods and needs of society. But first you must find your trajectory, and then comes the social coordination.”

– *Joseph Campbell*
(in conversation with Michael Toms)

Before learning to create and manage projects to achieve your vision of the future, you have to come up with a purpose in your life.

Don't worry; this is not serious. You can change it any time. You are the creator of your life, so you can modify, paint over, erase or destroy the life purpose statement whenever you choose. This exercise is based around filling in the blanks of various statements you will make about yourself. On completion, the reader/creator will have chosen a direction of focus for her life that is a self-determined measuring stick to judge the “fit” of relationships, work opportunities, recreational endeavors, career, and so on.

Coming up with a purpose for your life will allow you to measure all your vision statements for your projects and opportunities that come up in life against something you have chosen, rather than just reacting. You can change your life purpose or your vision statements for your projects any time. We just need a life purpose statement to start with.

Pull out your pencils and put on your Being cap. You are the creator of your universe. You may find it helpful to do some sort of presencing exercise to open your being to the universe of possibility. Let's begin with an exercise created by Phil Laut and presented in his book, *“Money is My Friend,”* modified slightly to fit our needs here. Do these steps one at a time. Do not skip ahead. Just complete one exercise and then go on. It is important to do things in this sequence so your mind doesn't get in your way.

EXERCISE ONE: CHARACTERISTICS

1. List below 15 characteristics of your Self. You may have previously considered some of them to be negative, but you can transform them in developing your life purpose. You may be intelligent, humorous, joyful, driven, slovenly, weird, whatever. Make sure you have 15. If you don't know 15, make them up. Have some fun.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____
10. _____ 11. _____ 12. _____
13. _____ 14. _____ 15. _____

If you didn't put 15 down, get back up there and finish!

2. Now circle your five favorite personality characteristics. Do it quickly – don't think too much, and move on to Exercise 2.

EXERCISE 2: HOW YOU ENJOY EXPRESSING YOUR CHARACTERISTICS IN CONCRETE ACTION IN THE REAL WORLD

1. Referring loosely to the five favorite personality characteristics you just circled, make a list of 15 actual behaviors that are ways you enjoy expressing these characteristics. For example, if one of your characteristics was generosity, a behavior you actually perform in the real world that exemplifies generosity could be "feeding the homeless by working in a soup kitchen on Sunday mornings." Other specific behavior examples could be writing, researching, cooking, pottery making, walking or taking the children on outings.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

After you have completed a list of at least 15 activities, and not before, pick your *five favorite* activities and circle them. Continue with Exercise 3.

EXERCISE 3: THE WORLD YOU WANT

Write a brief statement (25 words or so) of your vision of an ideal world. Write this vision in the present tense and in terms of how you want it to be rather than how you want it not to be. Begin your statement this way:

"An ideal world is one in which..."

When you finish the statement, move on to Exercise 4.

EXERCISE 4: YOUR LIFE PURPOSE

Now you are going to cut and paste your life purpose together. It's easy and fun. Here you go:

The purpose of my life is to use my *(list the five general characteristics you*

circled) _____ , _____ , _____ ,

_____ and _____ by *(list the five specific*

behaviors)

and _____

to bring about a world in which *(write in your ideal world statement)* _____

Congratulations! You now have a good draft of a life purpose statement of your own. Now edit it a bit. After you edit and/or revise it (if you want), type it and print it, or copy neatly. You can put it in your purse or billfold and carry it around with you. If you're on a bus or in a singles bar or at a party and you strike up a conversation with somebody and they ask you what you do for a living, whip out that puppy and hand it to them. In fact, carry a few extras so they can keep one if they like. This is the beginning of the conversation you generate that has you creating the kind of world you want to live in with the help of a whole bunch of other people.

Here is a sample life purpose statement in case you want an example to follow while revising yours. You can work on a life purpose statement like you work on a poem or song. Polish it and make it sing; make it move people; make people cry when they hear it. Write a song from it. Make a poster from it. Do a photo essay on it. Make a display of it. Write it on the wall next to the telephone. Put it on the refrigerator.

Here's one that someone just wrote in a workshop, and it's ready to cook with:

The purpose of my life is to use my listening skills, communicating ability, courage, charisma and joyfulness by giving speeches, telling stories, writing, teaching, being in my body and embracing loved ones to bring about a world in which every person lives in a family and in a community in which they are listened to and spoken to with honor and supported to live a life of honesty and constant creating.

You can see that in this person's statement there are six characteristics and six specific behaviors. In your own statement, add or subtract whatever makes this more powerful for you. Play with this to make it as clear and inspiring to you as possible. Make it inspiring to other people as well.