FIVE STEPS TO DISCOVERING YOUR PURPOSE
AND LIVING THE LIFE YOU WERE MADE FOR

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The Purpose Collective exists to help you make a difference in this world by doing what you were made for. We are a community of passionate individuals - activists, academics, artists and professionals - inspiring one another through our collective stories and bold ideas.

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE MANIFESTO?

THIS IS A FIELD MANUAL.

It’s a practical, hands-on guide for discovering your purpose in this world and living the life you were made for.

We will do this together by identifying the unique blend of

gifts, skills, opportunities and dreams that only you have.

We’ll learn how to craft these into a Personal Vision Statement for your life, designed to give you the freedom to live with greater focus, effectiveness and meaning.

But first…
WHAT IS IT YOU DREAM OF DOING?

Come on, don’t be afraid to voice it (even if it is just to yourself).

Good dreams reflect the longings placed in our hearts to work towards a world that is more inclusive, creative, beautiful and just. And your dreams will often reflect the unique contribution you’ve been made for in creating such a world.

My wife and I had a dream. We felt called to move to Nepal to do work that would serve some of the poorest communities in the world. But first we needed to find enough people to pledge $105,000 to make it a reality. It seemed impossible...

But after just six months, thanks to a community of others who were also willing to dream with us, we were in our new home, looking out at the Himalayas stacked along the horizon before us. What earlier seemed impossible had become a reality.

THE WORLD NEEDS PEOPLE WILLING TO DREAM. WILLING TO RISK IT ALL...
BUT WHY DO SO MANY DREAMS DIE BEFORE THEIR TIME?

Sadly, too many times, I’ve heard friends, colleagues and acquaintances express bold and life-giving dreams, only to catch up with them down the track to find that their dream had remained just that: a dream.

I wanted to grab them by the shoulders and say, *I believed in your dream! Why couldn’t you?*

The same answers seemed to keep to coming up. It was ‘the house’, ‘the job’, or even just ‘life’ itself - as if all of those things just happen to us without our consent, causing the dream to quietly die.

Why is this such a tragedy? Because...

YOUR DREAMS AREN’T JUST FOR YOU.

Whether you grasp this or not could be the difference between you building a *narrow* life (centred solely on your own wants, needs and desires) versus an *expansive* one (fixed instead on bringing hope to others by imagining and creating a world that could be so much more).

I’ve spent hours and hours in communities that don’t have the luxury to pursue anything other than survival. Where all that matters is the next meal, not whether they’ll be able to afford that car or holiday.

**Finding your purpose is not just for you. It’s for them:**

The ones, twos, thousands, perhaps even millions of others, who will either benefit immensely or miss out entirely if you don’t *get this.*
SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

There are cures that need to be found.

Causes that need to be fought for.

Social start-ups that need to be launched.

Kids that need to be educated.

Art that needs to be created.

THIS IS A CALL FOR EVERYONE.

BUT RIGHT NOW IT’S AN INVITATION FOR YOU.
You know, that thing, that when you do it, you’re in the zone, and everything else just melts away… Time. Hunger. Tiredness. Stress.

That thing that still leaves you feeling energised, even after spending all day doing it.

What is that for you?

Because here’s the thing:

**YOU WILL FIND YOUR PURPOSE WHEN YOU DISCOVER WHATEVER THAT IS FOR YOU, AND THEN SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE DOING IT FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS.**

Let’s discover your that.
If you’ve never taken the time to think about and articulate who you are, what you dream of, where you’re headed and the person you’re seeking to become...

Then how can you ever expect to live a life of focus, clarity, meaning and, most importantly, purpose?

**IF THIS IS YOU, DON’T PANIC. YOU’RE NOT ALONE.**

What if you had a Personal Vision Statement clarifying these things, crafted by you, for you and written at a time when you were at your best? Rested, relaxed, prepared.
A statement that you could pin above your desk, turn to in your diary, or open on your phone and look at every time you needed to make an important life decision.

Would that be helpful?

A Personal Vision Statement will help you to **do the right things, not more things.** It will ensure that you pursue paths that will see you operating out of your strengths, enabling you to make your greatest contribution to the world yet.

Chances are, you’ll experience many changes throughout your life. You’ll have different jobs. Live in different places. Be connected with different communities. Your Personal Vision Statement is something that can be relevant wherever you are, not limited to any one place or time, but always reminding you of the driving purpose and ‘non-negotiables’ of your life.

**AND DON’T RUSH.**

This is a slow-cook exercise, one that will require you to set aside some time alone, and personal vision is not one-size-fits-all. I have given you some examples from my own journey and others who have used this process, but while there are undoubtedly important common elements, your vision must be uniquely discerned by and fashioned for you.

[Click here](#) to download a clean template you can use to complete the following steps.
1. WHO AM I?

It’s up to you how you define yourself but I can’t emphasise enough that **if you haven’t thought this through properly, you can’t possibly begin to realise your purpose.** I’m not talking about who you wish you could be if you had a ‘do-over’, I’m talking about the person you already are. Flawed and imperfect, yes, but also made by no accident, immeasurably valuable and capable of doing incredible things.

A good way to start is to **make the following three lists of ten.** These lists will tell you a lot about yourself and remind you that you are who you are in community, not isolation.

**LIST 1: IMPORTANT PEOPLE** The people I care about or who influence me the most. My *People* list consists of my wife, family members, an author, a mentor, a few select mates, and God.

**LIST 2: IMPORTANT PLACES** For me includes places where significant events occurred in my life or where I made significant decisions; as well as the homes I’ve lived in, my work desk, a retreat centre, a favourite holiday destination, a place of worship, my favourite surf spot, and a café.

**LIST 3: IMPORTANT THINGS** My *Thing* list includes my wedding ring, laptop and phone (yes, seriously), my coffee mug, several books, my surf board, and my diaries.
2. WHAT ARE MY STRENGTHS, VALUES AND DREAMS?

Now for another set of lists. This time you have to limit yourself to just three entries under each.

**LIST 1: MY STRENGTHS**

(Which should ideally be the things you love to do) My top three are:

- **Storytelling.** I tell stories to shed light on difficult issues in order to help us imagine a better future.
- **Inspiring others.** I recognise and encourage the potential in others.
- **Casting vision.** I can see where we need to go and the paths that can take us there.

Your strengths might be anything from administration to hospitality (that’s my wife’s number one for sure!), or creativity.

*Need help ‘finding your strengths’ like I have? I suggest using the following resource which includes a personal online assessment to help you discover your strengths. This was invaluable for me.*

**LIST 2: MY VALUES**

(Write as many as you can and then choose your top three) My top three values are:

- **justice,**
- **empowerment** and **hope.**

Others have values that focus on loyalty, honesty, hard work, perseverance etc.

**LIST 3: MY PASSIONS**

I’m passionate about:

- **...seeing a world where poverty ceases to exist;**
- **...where every child has the opportunity to pursue their greatest potential regardless of age, race or religion;**
- **...and where people pursue generosity, love and justice over wealth, fame and success.**

I’ve been an aid and development worker by trade, but your passions will be specific to you and may be far more local than global. For example, a mother who is also a teacher may have passions to ‘raise my kids in an environment of love and encouragement’ and to ‘give every child I teach the best education possible’.
3. WHAT IS THE CONTEXT THAT I FIND MYSELF IN?

A Personal Vision Statement takes into account the realities of your context and how that context might be changing. You just need to describe the world around you (be it local, national or global) and what it is that most captivates your attention.

Your context might be one shaped by positive factors that you want to affirm and continue to build up, or negative factors that you feel need to be protested and redeemed. In most cases, it will be both.

For example, one line in my Personal Vision Statement is ‘I see a world of extreme inequality where ‘opportunity’ is disproportionately distributed’. I can’t tell you how much that one realisation led me to the work I now do with great passion and energy.

4. WHAT KIND OF PERSON AM I SEEKING TO BECOME?

This is where things can be a lot more like art than science, but being deliberate about articulating your unspoken vision of yourself is essential. So describe a future version of yourself from every angle you can. Think of where you are now and where you want to be when it comes to your spirituality, mental health, physical health, relationships, intellect and vocation.
5. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

We’re almost there and I know that if you’ve made it this far, you’re already beginning to discover significant truths about yourself that are going to help you live a much deeper life.

So now all you need to do is **put the pieces together**. Your final version can look however you like (mine is a mix of bullet points and short sentences) but at this stage I encourage you to aim for just three or four paragraphs that include: **a statement about yourself** (taken from step 2), **your context** (step 3) and **the person you are seeking to become** (step 4). You’ll draft and redraft this more than once. That’s okay. It’s all part of the genuine self-reflection necessary to create a life-changing Personal Vision Statement.
I feel like we’ve got to know each other through this, so let me finish by providing you my own Personal Vision Statement in full, so that you can see what one can look like in practice:

My relationship with God is what grounds me. I will turn to Him each day to receive His grace, my energy, and clarity to face the day’s tasks.

My family will always believe me when I say to them, “You come first.”

Wherever we live, we will know our neighbours and enter into life with them.

I will enjoy life by making time for my family, friends, recreation and my health.

I will remember that it is not all up to me to ‘fix’ the world (and that’s a very good thing)!

I am incredibly hopeful, optimistic and relational. I am a storyteller, motivator and visionary.

I dream of a world where every child has the opportunity to pursue their greatest potential.
I see a world of extreme inequality where ‘opportunity’ is disproportionately distributed. I meet children who are desperate to receive what should be their basic rights: access to food, water, shelter, safety and an education. And at the same time I know people who have everything they could ever want or need, yet are incredibly unhappy, unhealthy and unsatisfied.

So I will spend my time helping men, women and children to realise their abilities in accessing their basic rights. And calling those who are ‘rich’ materially into the adventure of living selflessly and generously, where our greatest contribution is measured not in terms of ‘wealth’ or ‘success’ but in the degree to which we spend our lives investing in others and making this world a better place.

And I want to become a leader who engages the public sphere with the truth, justice and beauty of a God who loves us and sent His son to lead us towards grace, healing and justice. All the while possessing the freedom and humility to relate to and learn from— with care, respect and authenticity— others whose views, beliefs and opinions differ from mine.
Becoming a truly effective person requires you to not only have a vision for your life and an understanding of why you were created, but the ability to execute that vision in tangible and meaningful ways on a day-to-day basis.

Here are a number of high-quality resources to help you go deeper:

**ON DISCOVERING YOUR ‘TRUE’ IDENTITY**

*Don’t Waste Your Life* by John Piper  
*Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* by Don Miller

**ON TASK MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY**

*What’s Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done* by Matt Perman  
*Getting Things Done: How to Achieve Stress-Free Productivity* by David Allen

**ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ‘DOING GOOD’**

*The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* by Shane Claiborne  
*Half the Sky: How to Change the World* by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

For more inspiring resources including movies, fiction, documentaries and information on volunteering overseas, visit our resource page.
An individual has not STARTED LIVING until he can Rise Above the NARROW CONFINES of his INDIVIDUAL CONCERNS to the BROADER CONCERNS of ALL HUMANITY.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.
CAN YOU HELP US?

If this resource has helped you, would you mind helping us? Here are three ways you can take action:

1. GET IN TOUCH
   Your feedback and personal stories encourage all of us at The Purpose Collective to keep creating more inspiring stories and resources for you.

   You can tweet Matt at @mdarvas or email him here. He promises to respond to anything you take the time to write.

2. SHARE THIS RESOURCE
   If you’ve found value in doing this, why not share this with those you care about?

   Share The Purpose Manifesto now:

   Facebook
   Twitter

3. JOIN US ONLINE
   The Purpose Collective
   Matt Darvas
   www.mattdarvas.com