

PURPOSE AND FEELINGS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

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accomplishment

WRITTEN BY

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## **Purpose and Feelings of Accomplishment**

Purpose is a tool. Day to day, month to month, year to year, I need feelings of accomplishments, the feeling that I am doing things which are fun, which give me life meaning, which spark my existence. The feelings of accomplishment I get from writing, from visiting Italian hill towns, from going to parties, from raising my children, from buying clothes from working with people, all these can change and will change. Each of these activities is a source from which I get feelings of accomplishment. As a creek can dry up for a few weeks or for years, so the sources of our feelings of accomplishment can dry up for a short period, long period or permanently. The purpose we have in our life determines the flow of our feelings of accomplishment. They are the sources of our satisfaction.

The concept or purpose in Contribution Training is a tool to help us look at the flow of our feelings of accomplishment. With purpose we can understand where our feelings of accomplishment come from, how they accumulate in ways that make our past rich for us, how our feelings of accomplishment take on shapes that enable us to see our future as hopeful and exciting.

## **Three Kinds of Purpose**

I want to look at three different kinds of purpose: superficial purpose, underlying purpose and broad or continuing purpose. We will examine each of these at length, but because they are central concepts, let me briefly explain what I mean by each of these before I go into a full explanation.

Superficial purpose is living from one car to the next, one man to the next, one party or even job to the next. It is always seeking the easiest and most immediate feelings of accomplishment. Our life then is superficial because our activities, literally our affairs don't link up with each other. We are entrapped in moments which have the appearance of both being satisfying, but we end up with a life that is desperate in its superficiality even though that life may appear attractive to others and even to ourselves.

Underlying purpose is having a career, building a home, raising a family. The satisfaction and sense of accomplishment that we feel from these activities add up day to day, month to month, year to year; they are not isolated activities and we are not isolated from the feeling that our lives has meaning, that we are significant, that we are in this world for a purpose. With underlying purpose, we build our own lives, and our authority and the lives and authority of those around us also grows. When we have underlying purpose, we are contributing. Underlying purpose, however it is infinite we retire from our job or a career, children leave home, husbands and wives can leave us.

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Broad or continuing purpose is not dependant on others for its ongoing existence. When we have a continuing purpose we are not beholden to someone else for the meaning and significance in our life. We both have control and can take responsibility for the shape of our lives. Broad and continuing purpose can be a life long vocation that doesn't end with retirement; it can be a sense of belonging and contributing to a community, a family and a place that continues after the departure of ones immediate family; broad purpose can be a hobby that becomes a life long interest. This purpose builds continual growth into our lives, even in old age we keep growing. Broad purpose literally keeps us alive. Broad purpose is Fritz Perls still working when he was seventy seven; a local peasant lady outside my window working in the fields in her sixties or perhaps even eighties; an ex convict in alcoholics anonymous staying away from the bottle and healing others; hopefully for me there is a continuing purpose in contributing training. Continuing Purpose is Dave Pellin surviving a serious attempt at suicide to go on and develop these ideas. A woman trapped as a housewife in the emptiness of her life when her children have left for college and the husbands interests are elsewhere, can find purpose in sisterhood of being with other women who are successfully growing through the same trap. Both her frustrations and aspirations come together in her purpose with broad and continuing purpose. Varied feelings of accomplishment from various parts of our life add together. They feed on themselves and feed into a centre that gives our life shape and is our purpose.

These three types of purpose: superficial, underlying and continuing are tools which hopefully can enable us to make sense of some of the most complex issues in life; why some people stay young and others grow old; why someone will go through tragedy and shrink into bitterness while someone else will go through an identical experience and be able to grow; why some people can beat an addiction like alcohol, drugs or television or gambling and others cannot; how some of us seem able to fulfil our talents and some of us never do; why some social programs work brilliantly while others fade rapidly. Purpose is a set of tools with which we can look at these problems

## **The Escape from Purpose**

In a way similar to our rush from the sanity of rest, we also can become desperate to resist the strength, the solidness, the life preserving quality of purpose we die: going slowly more inside. People retire to Arizona; it doesn't work and they die. Young men go to Vietnam full of purpose, find it is not there for them and turn to Heroin. Children leave home and parents age. Men and women drop out of careers for religion and can soon find their lives empty. Men and women drop out of religion for a career and can soon find their lives empty. People let go of the identity they have in a minority group and find themselves lost. Some of us travel to distant lands and soon find that travel is meaningless. We can loose the arena within which we can best develop, which is all we mean by purpose. We can be attracted to the mirage of a glamorous purpose only to find what we choose is not an area within which we are developing. We do not always know where our purpose lies. We can be in our purpose and not know it; we can be in our purpose and not be able to see it, purpose is elusive. Purpose is individual. Purpose is difficult.

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## **Search for Purpose**

How do we find purpose? How can we know whether a purpose is right for us? Purpose is like marriage; the choice individual, the maintenance difficult, the pleasures elusive.

Most of us cannot effectively consciously search for a mate. This is there certainly and we find whom we marry, but there is long, unconscious quality to that search. To consciously look for someone to marry will make us desperate. We know that is what we want, but we keep our awareness of that search in the background while we are searching. We cannot look for a husband or a wife or a purpose the way we look for a job. We need the patience to wait for the right mate or the right purpose to present themselves and then we need to be slow in exploring the commitment we are making to that person or that purpose.

There is a rightness we feel when we do find the right purpose that is individual to us, just as there is a rightness and sureness when we find the right mate. The rightness can often confound friends and family: why is Peter spending so much time with that weird David Pellin? Why does Elizabeth want to become a doctor? Why is Ken so wrapped up in the theory of the brain? Why is Val going to live in an Ashram? What is Bill's new religion? Why isn't Julian taking the job as the chairman of the department? Why is Mary going to marry Harry? What does she see in him? We could define a friend as someone who we can respect, see the rightness of a choice we make, even though he or she cannot understand that choice and even feels the choice is unattractive.

## **The Power of Purpose**

Contribution training is certainly not the first discovery of the power of purpose. Many people have a deep understanding of what we are calling purpose and in intuitively they are able to pass that knowledge on to others particularly to their children. Often successful programmes are based on power people almost immediately feel when through that programme, they begin to sense that they could experience possess a continuing purpose. One way of seeing the pull of purpose is to look at how, through purpose, people are often sucked into activities or movements that are obviously destructive to other people and even to themselves. Purpose creates Nazis and draws people to exploit gurus. Not everyone intuitively knows how to evaluate purpose in terms of hurt. While people will use other words that ours many people do understand. Purpose and are able easily to fill their life with the satisfaction that comes from purpose. However many, many people do not have either an understanding or a sense of how important these factors are in their lives. Also, many of us at times feel purpose and at other times simply feel lost and don't know what to do. With Contribution Training we hope to develop generalised tools that can be taught to people in a straight forward way. We hope to make generally teachable that, which can appear to be fortuitous talent that is available to some and not to others, a power to motivate that some organisations, by almost chance have and others do not.

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