

FINDING YOUR NORTH STAR: UNCOVERING YOUR LIFE'S PURPOSE

april newsletter

Having a meaningful, long-term goal is good for your well-being. Here's how to find one.

Research suggests that purpose is tied to having better health, longevity, and even economic success. It feels good to have a sense of purpose, knowing that you are using your skills to help others in a way that matters to you.

But how do you go about finding your purpose if it's not obvious to you? Is it something you develop naturally over the course of a lifetime? Or are there steps you can take to encourage more purpose in your life? People can find a sense of purpose organically—or through deliberate exercises and self-reflection. Sometimes, just having someone talk to you about what matters to you makes you think more intentionally about your life and your purpose.

Research shows that some teens find purpose after experiencing hardship. Having a supportive social network—caring family members, like-minded friends, or mentors, for example—helps youth to reframe hardship as a challenge they can play a role in changing for the better. That might be true of adults, too.

While hardship can lead to purpose, most people probably find purpose in a more meandering way—through a combination of education, experience, and self-reflection, often helped along by encouragement from others. But finding your purpose can be jump-started, too, given the right tools. Exercises aimed at uncovering your values, interests, and skills, as well as practicing positive emotions like gratitude, can help point you toward your purpose in life.



The month of April is a particularly special month for us students. It declares the beginning of a new academic session for us students. We at the health and mind club hope you are all ready for another exciting year and wish you all the very best as the new academic semester gets underway. Aside from that, April is also notable as it has several days that are connected to mental health, such as World Health Day and Autism Awareness Day. Now the question that most commonly arises when we think of these days is ‘Why would there be an established day for such kinds of topics.’ Well, these days remind us about the various mental disorders that some people face and how we as individuals can address the issue and help spread awareness on it. In addition, it also helps us to find our meaning and purpose in life, something that we as students are so eager to find out.



Here are some recommendations based on research on purpose:

1) IDENTIFY THE THINGS YOU CARE ABOUT

Purpose is all about applying your skills toward contributing to the greater good in a way that matters to you. So, identifying what you care about is an important first step.

In Purpose Challenge, designed by Bronk, high school seniors were asked to think about the world around them—their homes, communities, the world at large—and visualize what they would do if they had a magic wand and could change anything they wanted to change (and why). Afterward, they could use that reflection to consider more concrete steps they might take to contribute toward moving the world a little closer to that ideal.

2) REFLECT ON WHAT MATTERS MOST

Sometimes it can be hard to single out one or two things that matter most to you because your circle of care and concern is far-ranging. Understanding what you value most may help you narrow down your purpose in life to something manageable that also truly resonates with you.

Try asking yourself: What do these values say about you as a person? How do these values influence your daily life? How might they relate to what you want to do with the rest of your life? Doing this exercise can help you discover how you can put your values to use.

3) RECOGNIZE YOUR STRENGTHS AND TALENTS

We all have strengths and skills that we've developed, which help make up our unique personalities. Yet some of us may be unsure of what we have to offer. But it can also be helpful to ask others—teachers, friends, family, mentors—for input.

4) TRY VOLUNTEERING

Finding purpose involves more than just self-reflection. It is also about trying out new things and seeing how those activities enable you to use your skills to make a meaningful difference in the world. Volunteering in a community organization focused on something of interest to you could provide you with some experience and do good at the same time.



5) IMAGINE YOUR BEST POSSIBLE SELF

This exercise is particularly useful in conjunction with the magic-wand exercise described above. In a Purpose Challenge, high school students were asked to imagine themselves at 40 years of age if everything had gone as well as it could have in their lives. Then, they answered questions, like:

- What are you doing?
- What is important to you?
- What do you really care about, and why?
- The why part is particularly important because purposes usually emerge from our reasons for caring.

6) CULTIVATE POSITIVE EMOTIONS LIKE GRATITUDE AND AWE

To find purpose, it helps to foster positive emotions, like awe and gratitude. That's because each of these emotions is tied to well-being, caring about others, and finding meaning in life, which all help us focus on how we can contribute to the world.

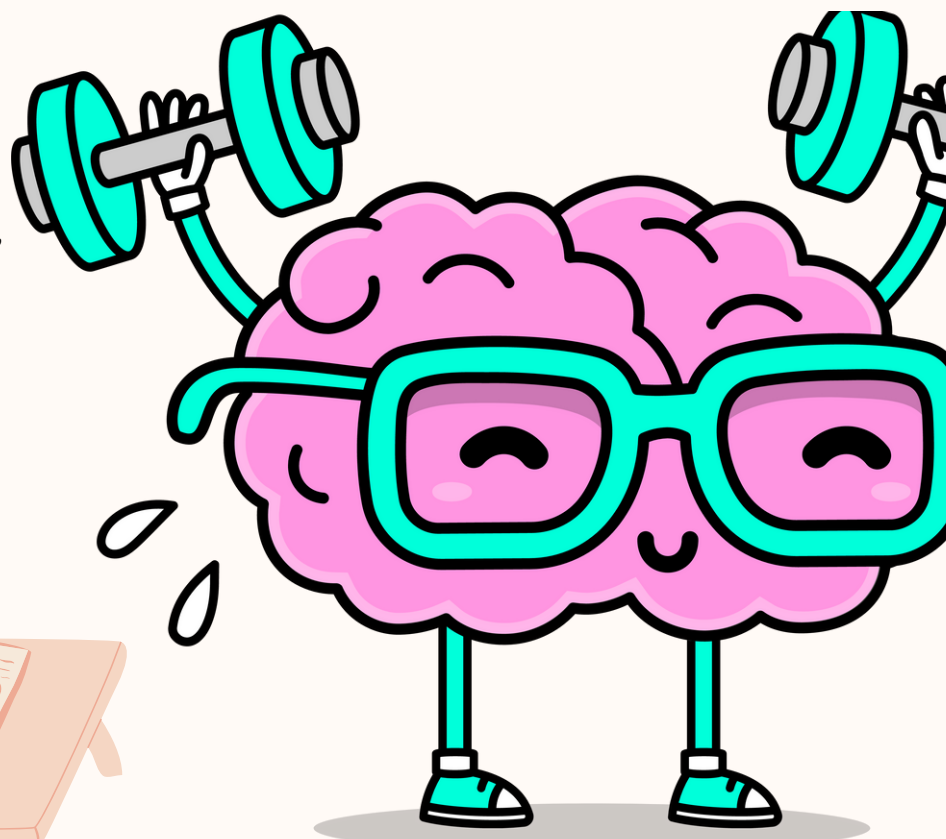


7) LOOK TO THE PEOPLE YOU ADMIRE

Sometimes the people we admire most in life give us a clue to how we might want to contribute to a better world ourselves. Reading about the work of civil rights leaders or climate activists can give us a moral uplift that can serve as motivation for working toward the greater good.

However, sometimes looking at these larger-than-life examples can be too intimidating. If so, you can look for everyday people who are doing good in smaller ways. Maybe you have a friend who volunteers to collect food for the homeless or whose work in promoting social justice inspires you.

You don't need fame to fulfill your purpose in life. You just need to look at your inner compass—and start taking small steps in the direction that means the most to you.



FINDING YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE

There is a period in our lives where we gradually have to start taking on more responsibilities. At this stage of life, we usually begin to wonder what purpose we as individuals serve on this planet. What some people fail to understand is that we came into this world to live every second of it – to value our family, friends, and the people we surround ourselves with.

As students, it's very common for us to feel nervous and anxious at times. The feeling of emptiness when we lose someone we care about; the constant frustration and anxiety when we fail to score the marks we desired ends up making us feel like there is no meaning in life, but it's not such a bad thing because as students, we all go through it. However, this can serve as a turning point that makes us reflect on our mistakes and become better. This journey of self-reflection in our lives not only guides us to learn through our mistakes but also empowers us to create a path that creates meaning and purpose.



Journal Prompt

1. What are you grateful for in your life recently?
2. Define what happiness means to you and what it would look like in your life
3. What does living in your truth mean to you and how can you make it a reality if it isn't already
4. What is something that you want to achieve in your lifetime?
5. What are your strongest talents and abilities, how can you use them to help the world around you?
6. If money or responsibilities weren't a factor in life, what would your life look like – describe it in detail. How can you make that life your reality?
7. What are some important recent events in your life?
8. What is holding you back in life? Be honest – how can you move past these things?
9. Write about what you can do to start taking action towards living a purposeful life

What is Autism & Bipolar Disorder

Autism is a disorder that refers to a range of conditions marked by challenges with social skills, behavioral patterns, speech impediments, and nonverbal communication. But despite these "setbacks", autism has its unique strengths and differences.

Another such mental health condition is bipolar disorder.

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition characterized by extreme mood swings. These mood swings may range from emotional highs (mania or hypomania) and lows like depression and anxiety. These drastic fluctuations in a person's mood may impair their sleep, energy, activity, judgment, behavior, and the ability to think clearly.



SOME COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ON AUTISM

On the spectrum it ranges from difficulty in social interactions, communication, atypical patterns of activities and behaviors and unusual fixation on detail along with response to sensations. Let's delve into some myths followed by the actual facts on the illness.

HOW WE CAN HELP?

It is imperative that we educate society and increase the public's awareness on mental disorders, as it encourages nipping the problem in the bud and promotes acceptance across communities.

A few such ways we can spread awareness are:

1. Workshops: seminars can help people learn about the signs, symptoms, and treatment options for mental disorders.

2. Accurate portrayals of mental disorders in the media: this can help to destigmatize mental disorders and promote empathy and understanding.

3. Supporting mental health advocacy organizations: this can amplify their efforts and enable them to improve services for those living with mental disorders.

| <i>Myth</i> | <i>Fact</i> |
|---|--|
| People with ASD are intellectually disabled | People with ASD can live normally in society and are not intellectually challenged, given a proper support system. In places where a specialized support system exists, people with ASD will almost always be intellectually challenged. |
| All people with ASD have a similar experience or attributes | On the spectrum there lies a range of symptoms, and so a person with ASD might not necessarily share the same experiences with another, "If you know one person with ASD, that really means that you know just one person with the condition". |
| Vaccines cause autism | ASD is caused due to, not fully understood, changes in the brain, there is no scientific linkage to vaccines and autism. |
| People with autism like being detached | Though social interaction is impaired with people with ASD, recent studies have shown they want to form relationships with others, people with ASD do live their lives with fulfilling relations with family and friends. |

Tell us about yourself

We all have something in our lives which we are really grateful for or something that we are working towards achieving in our lives, may it be getting into the university of our choice, scoring exceptional marks for the board exam or having a career in the field we want to pursue. To get a better picture, we asked some students what they have been grateful for in life recently and what they want to be remembered for. Let us delve into the answers shared by some of the students.

Q) WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR IN YOUR LIFE RECENTLY?

One thing that I'm extremely grateful for in life is my friends and family, and the support they've given me.

~Ali ahmed 12-J

I'm grateful for a new start to the year and the opportunities to grow and learn that come with it. I'm also immensely grateful to the people around me, who are always supportive and optimistic of my endeavors. ~Zoya 12-E

Q) WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE IN YOUR LIFETIME?

I want to be financially stable enough that I can actually make a change in the world, be it educational institutes, reestablishment programs, housing programs, etc.

~Zufiqar 12-M

To me, my life's greatest aim is to land my dream job as an aerospace engineer. I've always aspired to be at the forefront of this rapidly dawning space age, so carving my niche as an aerospace engineer would cement my position amongst the explorers and pioneers of tomorrow.

~ Nandan 12-J

Q) WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED FOR ?

If anyone is remembering me, I would want to be remembered for the few good things that I have done , if my presence in the school has energized good vibes . And yes,my passion - CHESS - to be remembered as an ace chess player!! ~ Jay 12-M

I would want to be remembered for my dance, for my compassionate nature and for my hard work

~ Gargi 12-

Credits:

Ahadali 12-J
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Syed Saifullah 12-M
Zulfiqar 12-M

