

The Power of Personal Purpose By Tony Hawk

It has been a few years since Rick Warren's book, The Purpose Driven Life, claimed the top spot as an international best seller with over 30 million copies sold. The Purpose Driven paradigm encourages people to maintain an intentional, strategic and balanced focus on the purpose they have identified for their lives.

Intentional, Strategic and Balanced are key concepts critical to being effective in any arena of life, but especially in leadership. Stephen Covey, in his best selling book, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, became the corporate champion for business leaders creating and living by a clearly defined personal mission and vision which they have deliberately and carefully crafted. In my coaching and training I have encouraged leaders to clarify their personal values as well. The three of these, personal mission, personal vision, and personal values result in personal purpose.

The power of personal purpose is that it gives clarity for decisions, choices, investments of time and money, what to say yes to and what to say no to. When lived out, personal purpose leads to the incorporation of personal disciplines that allow us to focus on and achieving a desired and clearly envisioned outcome. Personal purpose becomes the guiding beacon that tells us whether our life is on target. It provides constant feedback informing us when we are getting off track and compels us to make course corrections.

Every time I teach on this subject I give participants insight into my own purpose. The part that seems to have the greatest impact is when I share with them a brief vignette of my personal vision. When Steven Covey gave instructions about developing a personal vision, he suggested getting the picture so clear that you could see the video playing in your mind. So watch with me as I share just a small part of my personal vision of what I want life to look like when my wife and I are 75 years old:

My wife and I are sitting on the front porch of our home that overlooks a body of water, surrounded by all our grandchildren, when one of them says, "Papa, come on down and play with us." And I immediately jump up and run off the porch to go play with them.

Then I ask the question, "What are the implications just in this short vignette?"

1. My wife and I are still together – This requires attention to this important relationship.
2. We live in nice home overlooking a body of water – This requires attention and discipline regarding spending and investments, i.e. saying no to some things we might otherwise enjoy, and making sacrifices for others in order to see this vision fulfilled.
3. Our grandchildren are at our house – This requires that I foster good relationships with them as well as with my children and their spouses, such that they are comfortable letting them stay with us.

4. I jump up and run off the porch and go play – quite a feat for a 75 year old, don't you think? This requires I remain disciplined regarding my health and fitness

In order for that vision to be achieved, I cannot wait until I am 75 to begin enacting the disciplines that will ensure the greatest likelihood for all these to occur. In fact, every day I am faced with choices that have potential to impact the vision, i.e. whether to buy a new car or invest; whether to get up in the morning for my daily exercise, or sleep in; whether to eat those extra calories and fats, or to make healthier choices; whether to pick up the phone and call the kids and grandkids or to watch TV; etc.

I live a more disciplined and intentional life today than I ever imagined I would, primarily because I have clarity regarding who I am, the impact I want to have every day, and where I want it all to end up when all is said and done. I am also fully aware that I am not in complete control of the outcomes of my life, but I do know that I must do all that is within me to ensure the greatest likelihood that the outcome that I envision becomes a reality.

Additionally, my personal purpose or mission is: Helping people achieve their highest, God-given potential. This is something I have done at every stage of my career and something I enjoy getting to do every day in my coaching and consulting practice.

Living on Purpose with a clear Vision is definitely a life worth living.

Take some time to gain greater clarity of purpose and vision for yourself. Your life will never be the same.

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