

STEPS

TO LIVING A LIFE THAT COUNTS

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FIVE ESSETIAL STEPS TO LIVING ON PURPOSE

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Life-Focus Online Course

My Worst Funeral Ever!

I've done a lot of funerals in my 30 plus years of pastoral ministry, but this one was the worst...ever!

It was a bleak, wintry day and I was already a bit blue. The snow machine of Lake Erie had kicked in and I was driving under gray skies into the west side of downtown Cleveland. The once bright and promising Leave It To Beaver neighborhood of the 50's was now stained from wear, and the snow and cold only added to the dreary scene.

I drove through the slush, found my way to the well-used funeral home, stepped inside the dark foyer, with the organ dirge already droning – unaware my day was about to get even more bleak.

I'd made a commitment to someone I barely knew to officiate the funeral of someone that the person I barely knew, barely knew. It turned out that the funeral was for an old man who had lived well into his 90's. And here's where the day gets even more depressing.

Only 9 people showed up and 7 of them were forced to. (That's no exaggeration!)

Evidently the old man had not only been really old, but he had been really mean and no one – absolutely not one – had anything good to say about the man laying in the box up front (can you say “awkward”), and I certainly wasn't going to make something up, so I read a few scriptures (that's always safe) and did a short prayer (also safe), then rolled him to the hearse, drove to the cemetery, lowered him into the ground and threw some dirt on him.

That was it. A life lived. A legacy left.

My worst funeral ever occurred over 25 years ago, yet it haunts me and still motivates me to this very day. As I drove home, I decided then and there that I would live my life in a way that counts. And by the grace of God (and some really hard work) – I have.

How about you?

Are you building a life that counts? When you die will you leave a legacy that inspires?

There's nothing that affects me more than seeing people live life aimlessly or squander the opportunity that life offers each of us. So if you are interested in building a life that counts and leaving a legacy that inspires, then this eBook is for YOU!

- *Here Are Five Steps That Will*
- *Help You Build A Life That Counts*
- *And Leave a Legacy That Inspires.*

Step One: Remember You Are Going To Die

Some people believe that thinking about death is morbid, but it's really the opposite. An honest awareness of our mortality should be a motivator for life. Therefore, to build a life that counts, one of the first things we need to do is be reminded and be motivated by the fact that we only have one life and it passes really, really fast.

Rick Warren, in his book, A Purpose Driven Life, challenges us to think about our life in the light of our death with these words:

You may feel it's morbid to think about death, but actually it's unhealthy to live in denial of death... Only a fool would go through life unprepared for what we know will eventually happen. You need to think more about eternity, not less... When we fully comprehend that there is more to life than just here and now, and you realize that life is just preparation for eternity, you will begin to live life differently.

The theologian Sinclair Ferguson challenges us with the same idea in this way:

Normally, we do not think of death as a biblical doctrine which carries practical repercussions for the Christian. To be frank, it is not a subject to which contemporary Christians give much sympathetic thought. It runs too obviously counter to the spirit of our time, and to think about it at all is to be accused of ‘morbidity.’

Author and speaker, Gary Thomas, in his book, Seeking the Face Of God, says it best:

Most of us recognize that we will eventually die, but this recognition is reserved for a distant event decades from now; not today, not this week, not this month, not this year. Death is a foreigner, not a close neighbor...[But]The ancients found great spiritual benefit in looking death in the face and seizing its reality and making it their servant. They used death to teach them how to live.

It’s no secret. We’re all going to die and when we do, we’re going to leave some kind of legacy. And if we are going to build a life that counts, then thinking about our death is the place to start.

Step Two: Evaluate Where You Are Currently At

If we don’t know where we’re at and if we don’t know where we’re going, then guess what – we’re lost. Therefore before you can move forward into building a life that counts, you really have to first know two things:

- 1. Where you are currently at***
- 2. Where you want to go next***

This step of self-reflection and self-evaluation is a HUGE step. It really isn’t that complicated to do, but you do have to be willing to take some time to slow down, do some homework, and THINK.

For most of us our tendency is to react to “life” and then wake up one day and wonder “how did I become this person? Or “how did I end up at this place in life?” But when we take the time to reflect, we are able to think about our lives as we live them, instead of as an afterthought, or worse yet – a regret.

So take some time and ask yourself these four questions:

Am I becoming the person I want to become?

If not, in what areas am I stuck and why?

Am I accomplishing the things I want to accomplish?

If not, what things do I want to accomplish and what's keeping me from accomplishing them?

Take some time on these questions. Don't rush through them. Think about them. Meditate on them. And then come back to them. It's a crucial step so answer them as thoroughly and honestly as you can.

Step Three: Know Where You Want To Go

Everyone ends up somewhere in life but we have the opportunity to end up somewhere on purpose!

Granted, it takes some time and hard work to figure out where we want to go in life, but if we are going to build a life that counts this step is a MUST! If we don't know where we want to go, then most of our effort, activities, energy, plans, goals, investments of time and money will end up aimless. We will spin in circles going everywhere but really going nowhere. But when we know where we want to go (or even have a basic direction), it helps us prioritize what we do and why we do it and it provides us with a consistent direction that pulls us forward in life.

Knowing where we want to go has been described by many different names:

- Finding Your Life's Passion
- Knowing Your Life's Call
- Living By A Personal Mission Statement
- Knowing Your Purpose in Life
- Living a Focused Life
- Having An IBrand
- Discovering Your Personal Compass

But whatever it's called, knowing where we are going comes down to two fundamental things:

1. Knowing Who You Want To Be

And

2. Knowing What You Want To Do

Take the time to think through the two exercises below and you'll be closer to knowing who you want to be and what you want to do.

The First Exercise: *Identify and Evaluate These Five Components About Yourself*

1. Your Unique and Consistent Passions

- You might be extraordinarily gifted at something; however, without the passion, proper motivation, or desire, you may never reach your full potential.
- There should be an obvious relationship between your passion and your focused life. When your passion is aligned to your life's purposes you will be pulled into your personal destiny.
- Passion will move you. With the proper amount of passion, the energy behind something you are doing is not so much labor – but love. Accomplishing the things that you love without causing a lot of personal frustration, stress, or burnout is a sweet sensation and is a sign you are doing what you were created to do.

2. Your Giftedness

Your giftedness is a combination of your:

- Natural abilities
- Acquired skills
- Spiritual gifts
- What things you are “naturally” good at?
- What are the things that those closest to you say you're good at?
- What are the things that when you do them, they take little effort from you but they get massive response from others?

3. Your Unique Personality

- Are you an introvert or an extrovert?
- Are you a contemplator or a doer?
- Are you analytical or intuitive?
- Where do you fall on the DISC profile?
- What are your strengths in Strength Finders?
- Where do you fall on the Briggs-Myers personality profile?

4. Your Defining Life Experiences

- Each of us have had certain foundations that have shaped us (i.e. how we grew up, where we grew up, what our family life was like, what our education experience was like, what our spiritual/religious background was like and etc.). And each of us have had life experiences that have shaped us. Some good ones and some more challenging or difficult ones.
- And the combination of these two components that have shaped who we are, are often the “raw material” for our contribution in life. For example: if you are someone who has lost a child, it may now be part of your life’s mission to help other parents who’ve lost a child. Or, if you grew up in a wealthy family but didn’t learn how to manage money and as a result, lost it all; part of your life mission may now be to teach others on wealth management. Our past is often the “raw materials” to our future.

5. Your Underlying Life Philosophies

- As we process through life, whether defined our undefined, conscious or unconscious, we develop certain underlying philosophies or a certain worldview concerning life. These become foundational values that shape what we believe, what we do, what we don’t do, why we do or don’t do certain things, how we make decisions and etc.

Taking the time to identify and assess these five key components about ourselves is central to knowing a bit more about who we are and what we are designed to do.

The Second Exercise:

Another way to discover who you want to become and what you want to accomplish, is by answering these two questions:

1) If time or money wasn’t an obstacle, what would I do as my contribution to life?

2) If someone woke you up in the middle of the night and ask you “What do you want to do with the rest of your life?” and you only had 1 minute to answer them, what would you say?

How you answer these two questions, matched with the five components listed above, will give you a good indication of what your life mission and message may be. It may not be fully defined or fully formed, but if you will begin moving toward this direction, you will begin moving closer and closer to who you want to become and what you want to accomplish.

Step Four: Put A Plan In Place

Once you’ve worked on these first three steps, then put a plan in place and once you’ve put a plan in place, work that plan. This is where building a life that counts is either a nice idea or something that you are actually committed to. Committing to 1) what you are going to do, 2) how you are going to do it and 3) when you are going to do it - is essential to Building A Life That Counts.

This doesn’t have to be a HUGE plan. It doesn’t have to be a five year plan with every date and detail spelled out. Just a consistent plan, week to week, month to month, and year to year that’s connected to who you want to become and what you want to accomplish will move you in the right direction. And, over time, if you’ll stay with it, you’ll be amazed at your progress. There are a lot of helpful time management tools I could recommend to you, but instead of doing that let me offer some time-proven principles about time management and then show you some plans that I’m using in my own life to Build A Life That Counts and to Leave a Legacy That Inspires. I think the two personal plans that I’m using will be helpful tools and templates as you think through and work on your own plans.

First, Some Time-Proven Principles About Time Management

- Unseized time flows toward our weaknesses
- Unseized time comes under the influence of dominant people in our world
- Unseized time surrenders to the demands of all emergencies
- Unseized time gets invested in things that gain public acclamation
- To recapture my time I must know my rhythms of maximum effectiveness
- To use my time wisely I must have good criteria for choosing how to use my time
- To seize and command my time most effectively I must budget it far in advance

Second, Two of my own personal plans for Building A Life That Counts

- The first attachment is my personal life mission statement and my time management plan that accompanies it.
- The second attachment is an Infinitely Better Life Letter. This letter communicates that over the next 13 years of my life (from age 57 to age 70) who I have become and what I have accomplished.

These two attachments will help you think through steps 2 – 4.

Step Five: Discipline and Diligence

“Nothing is more common than unfulfilled potential.” - Howard Hendricks

A true story about the great violinist, Itzak Pearlman, illustrates how importance discipline and diligence is in our efforts to build a life that counts and leave a legacy that inspires.

At a charity reception Mr. Pearlman, stood in a roped off area greeting guests as they filed by. As one of the guest shook hands with the violinist he said, “Mr. Pearlman you were phenomenal tonight. Absolutely amazing.” Pearlman smiled but said nothing. The man continued, “All my life I have had a

great love of the violin, but I have never heard anyone play the violin as brilliantly as you did tonight.”
Pearlman smiled again, but said nothing, and the man continued, “You know Mr. Pearlman, I would
give my whole life to be able to play the violin like you did tonight.” Pearlman smiled again and said, “I
have.”

As Theodore Roosevelt once said, “There has never yet been a person in our history who led a life of ease whose name is worth remembering.” It’s very true.

Conclusion

I trust this material is helpful to you.

For more information on focusing your life so you can live a more purposeful life

Check Out Our:

Online "Life-Focus Course" [HERE!](#)

It is the same material and process that I use in my Premium One-on-One Coaching, but you can get it for a fraction of the cost and go through it at your own pace and convenience.

Please continue to visit my website at www.kenroberts.com for further resources and if I can further help you please contact me at ken@kenroberts.com