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What Is Your Purpose In Life: To Go On The Hero's Journey

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What is your purpose in life? This question is as old as the human race itself. Some argue that our purpose is to find happiness. Others say our purpose is to love others, to become the best version of ourselves, or to follow God's will. Still others say there is no purpose to life at all.

I believe that our lives do have a purpose, and that the clues are all around us in plain view. You can't miss them. Our purpose is so deeply imbedded in our culture that we easily overlook it or take it for granted.

Put simply, your purpose in life is to live the life of a hero.

The hero's journey is captured in all the great stories in literature, and in all the great movies we enjoy on the big screen. Hero stories endow our lives with meaning and reveal how a human life is meant to be lived.

Hero stories illuminate your true purpose in four ways:

1. You will go on a journey. At some point during your life, you will journey away from the comforts of your familiar world. In *The Wizard of Oz*, a tornado sends Dorothy to the land of Oz. In *The Fault in Our Stars*, cancer sends Hazel to Amsterdam. The hero's journey can be real or metaphorical. Sometimes heroes choose the journey; sometimes the journey is chosen for them. Brace yourself – your life always includes some type of voyage, fraught with discomfort but crucial in revealing your life purpose.

2. You will grow from adversity. Overcoming obstacles and failures is a central part of your life journey. Children's fairy tales prepare us for adversity by featuring

heroes who grow from their setbacks. The three little pigs find a way to outsmart the big bad wolf. Bambi overcomes his mother's death to grow into a great leader. "*Where you stumble, there lies your treasure,*" observed mythologist Joseph Campbell. Heroes use adversity to better themselves. When you are challenged by the darkest of life circumstances, know that your journey is fashioning you into a wiser, more resilient individual.

3. You will assemble a team of allies. You should never undertake your journey alone. Heroes find a way to attract sidekicks, friends, and mentors to help them overcome obstacles. Matt Langdon of the *Hero Construction Company* calls it "building a team around you." Often the person who helps you is someone you least expect. Remember that the point of the journey is to transform you into a stronger, better person. Trusted allies will guide you through adversity and will assist you in becoming forever transformed by your journey.

4. You will give back to society – The hero's journey is far more than mere personal transformation. Once you return from your journey, you will use your new-found gifts to make the world a better place. In *12 Years a Slave*, the hero Solomon survives his ordeal as a slave and then works to end slavery. In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus endures his turbulent voyage home and then becomes a wise ruler of Ithaca.

Your life purpose is to use your own personal transformation to help transform society. Once mentored by another, you will now mentor others. Your selfless service to the world will forge your place in the human chain of love shown by people who came before you and by people who will follow you.

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The hero's journey is not just illustrated in fiction but in the real lives of the world's greatest heroes, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr. These three legends lived the four truths of heroism outlined above and used their gifts to forever change the world.

You may not be on the life trajectory of a Gandhi or a Mandela, but rest assured you are on a hero's journey that has momentous implications for yourself and for the world. Perhaps you are in the process of overcoming cancer, a difficult childhood, a financial setback, or some major transgression. As you struggle, remember that regardless of the outcome, you are fulfilling your life's purpose. Each human life is meant to be a heroic life.

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