



*(Adapted for SusanJeffers.com monthly newsletter.
Based on the writings of Susan Jeffers, PhD.)*

FINDING YOUR "RIGHT NOW" PURPOSE

"The great and glorious masterpiece of man is to live with purpose."
- Michel de Montaigne

Susan wrote many times about finding meaning and purpose in our lives. When we are living lives of meaning and purpose, we can let go of any drama that unfolds around us. It can help to take away a lot of our fear about the future, and help us to embrace the uncertainty in our lives. Susan described meaning and purpose as:

*As I see it, **our sense of meaning** is the knowledge that we truly make a difference... that we are needed... that we are important... that our lives count for something. **Our sense of purpose** is the determination to act in ways that are consistent with our sense of meaning... that are consistent with the knowledge that we truly do make a difference.*

While meaning and purpose go hand-in-hand to create a wonderfully fulfilling life, it can be hard to find meaning in our life without first knowing our purpose. Our purpose is the actions that we take that make us happy, that give us a sense of fulfillment and of peace. For Susan, it was living a life of learning and then teaching others. For some people, purpose might mean taking care of their family or working with the ill. Perhaps purpose could be doing research or building a company in an effort to reach a lofty goal, or perhaps it is working in a garden or growing vegetables.

How to determine your purpose is by asking:

What do I love to do? How do I use what I love to do to help the world around me?

We, like Susan, may find more than one purpose in our lives at any given time. Susan found purpose in both learning and teaching. Perhaps cooking gourmet meals and being committed to fitness give you purpose. Or maybe it's a combination of a number of things that help you find meaning in your life.

Susan notes that the purpose in our life will also change as we go through different stages of our lives. When we are young, our purpose is to be a student - to be dedicated to education. When we are older, we find purpose in other activities (even if education still plays a role.) The purpose of our lives is different at ages 20, 40, 60, and even 100. It is something that we will always need to reevaluate. In fact, our purpose can change even from year-to-year. Think of the difference of focus in a young married couple from the year before they have children to the year after. Or the head of a company's department the year before retirement and the year after.

It is important to keep in mind that what we are asked to do changes with our circumstances in life. It would be unwise to hang on to any particular means of spreading our meaning and purpose into this world. There is always something wonderful to do in whatever form that takes throughout our lives.

Many of the mental problems we experience as we grow older have very little to do with the aging process. It has more to do with getting stuck in our ways and not having a clear understanding of what gives our lives purpose. Or being stuck in a way that was right for us many years before, but is no longer right for us now. Our dream job at age 25 is probably not going to be the same at 45. A new retiree will have to completely revise how they find purpose and meaning in their life. The world is constantly changing, and our needs and the needs of those around us are constantly changing. To keep up, we need to be flexible to make changes within our lives and find new opportunities for what will make us fulfilled.

Take a few minutes today to think about the purpose of your life right now. Is it a purpose that satisfies you, that gives you peace in your heart? If the answer is no, perhaps it's time to take the opportunity to explore your "right now" purpose. What you discover might surprise you. According to Susan, by knowing your "right now" purpose, you will then find meaning in your life.

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Adapted from Susan's writing in *End the Struggle and Dance with Life*.