

THE MEANING, VALUE, AND PURPOSE OF LIFE

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Over the years, I have asked many people of many ages from many walks of life to tell me what they think the meaning, value, and purpose of life are. I have never received an answer that I consider to be even remotely close. I am writing this to give you a summary of the answers, and to encourage you to share them with others.

The fact that parents, religious leaders, and school teachers do not teach these things to children is a sad testament to our society's grasp of fundamentals that all people should know and embrace. It shouldn't be startling to find out how much people are in the dark about these things, but sadly, they are. Perhaps you can shed a little light on the matter for them.

Why is this important? The main reason is that it helps a person, young or old, to have a foundation set of principles that motivate and guide his choices and behaviors. Ultimately a study of the issues relating to meaning, value, and purpose will take the truth seeker from fact (knowledge) through meaning (philosophy), to religion (value). The end result is that if people are conscious of the noble reasons for their lives, then they will gladly make the choices that lead them there. That, of course, will produce a better, more benign world on which all of humankind can live and thrive.

These matters are irrelevant if the individual does not have worthy personal goals - noble ambitions to be, do, have, and produce in various areas of life.

And now to the answers.

Ask yourself how and to what extent you can share these principles of understanding about life with others around you.

Young people are normally hungry for truth, and they recognize it when they hear it.

You could make a big and positive difference in their lives.

[Reality-Check Test](#) –

Give the test to your students, friends, and family. It's fun and thought-provoking.

Note: <http://mindshare.ws> has other articles like this.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

The *meaning of life is its adaptability*. That means the life through which we go are in fact the adapting process. You are given a hand of cards to play, and you either play the hand, declare “no game”, or change the rules of the game. Only the powerful can change the rules, and then only in some games. You have chosen to play some hands that you should have folded, and played some games you should have walked away from. So you have a way to go in mastering the techniques of adapting – choosing your games and playing them so all concerned can win, particularly yourself. Nevertheless, you *are* adapting, and that is having an interesting effect that makes life really worth living.

The curious thing about adapting is that a sane person who is sincere of intent and action will behave, to the impartial outside observer, like a servomechanism. Servos are devices that are set on a course, sense the direction, and send correction commands to the steering and drive mechanisms in order to keep the device on course. An airplane AutoPilot is an example of a servomechanism. How this relates to sane, sincere humans is that a child who makes an error, (such as touching a hot stove), will receive feedback (such as burning pain) that tells him he made a mistake, and will deduce from the experience that it is suicidal and stupid to touch the hot stove. The child will learn, and never touch a hot stove again.

A child's servomechanism, if in proper working order as established by the behavior and teaching of adults in the vicinity the child, will lead the child to **adapt** to circumstances to as to improve his quality of life. Pain, pleasure, and other forms of feedback will serve to help the child adapt, but ideals should stimulate the enlightened and mature adult.

THE VALUE OF LIFE

The **value of life is its *progressability***. In all the process of adapting, you are getting better and better, if you are sincere about progressing. Many people are not, and do not see this value to life. They stagnate and do nothing. Or they do criminal or unethical things that are a violation of their own purposes. But, the fun thing about this is that no matter how badly life sucks, you can, from this moment, make it better, see it better, do it better, think it better, and it WILL get better for you.

Anything that gets better as time goes by is a joy to experience, particularly since it never ends. And you, being an enlightened truth-seeker, *know* it will never end, particularly if you are a religionist.

This means you have a choice: you either get busy living (progressing) or get busy dying (not progressing). Since we probably live forever (the spaceship ride on this planet and beyond is optional), you could spend a long time doing nothing till you decide to get going in pursuit of your dreams rather than quaking, frozen in fear, or running from, your nightmares. Since you are probably the more aware type of person, it is important for you to progress daily toward your dreams.

Even though you are making progress if you are adapting properly, the process might not be noticeable. One reason is that people tend to progress in cycles that consist of spurts of achievement followed by periods of rest and regeneration to prepare for the next climb. Apparently these cycles never end. What drives people to engage the cycles? Curiosity. If it weren't for our curiosity as to how good things can be, life would be no fun.

The second reason progress might not be noticeable is that it is so gradual that one does not focus on it. That is why the person was wise who said "The fastest way to become a frog is to live loyally each day as a tadpole.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

The **purpose of life is to develop a balanced and magnificent personality**. That means to be as good, true, and beautiful as you possibly can be, consistent with your capacity, and to become the ideal embodiment of love, mercy, and ministry in your behavior toward others. Everything seems to have its limits, and none of us even comes close to reaching our limits of personality and power.

Nevertheless, even though your capacity for personal perfection limits you, you can be still be perfect within the limits of that capacity. Obviously, then, a person who is SINCERE, can go all the way to the final limit of his capacity in personal perfection of a balanced and unified personality.

One exciting consideration about this possibility is the fact that we know when we work out with weights and exercise, we build up strength endurance, and when we practice a skill we become more expert at deploying the skill. In fact with continual practice in developing a skill, the part of the brain responsible for that skill actually becomes more massive. For example, the music center of the brain of a concert musician who practices classical music several hours every day is three times larger than a non-musician's brain music center. So, even the brain can grow "muscles".

What makes this exciting is that as muscles grow, so does the capacity to do work with them. Therefore, just because you have serious capacity limits in some areas of your life is no reason to think you have to live with them forever, for you can change your capacity for the better by simply working out and exercising your muscles of character and personality. This will make you a better person, and nobody knows how much better he can be than he is now.

The concept of balance means one must not go overboard on some characteristics and underboard on others. One must spend adequate time and energy on each.

The concept of magnificence implies a high degree of quality. One develops quality in any area only by focus and exercise - concentrated work. One develops impeccability (personal perfection to the extent capacity allows) by routine, frequent, and vigorous exercise, and then by conscience application of the characteristic to dealing with the problems and opportunities of living.

All of that is nice, so long as you understand what personality is. Well that is another question that stumps people, and I will deal with in a [subsequent article](#).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

There are about 6 billion people in the world, and most of them, upwards of 5 billion, are religious, recognizing and honoring deity in some form or another. This is not proof that God exists, but it is proof that gaining God's appreciation, measuring up to God's expectations, and growing somehow to become "like" God in one's motivating ideals, one's judgment, and one's ability to love and serve others, is highly motivating. If it weren't for that, our world would be a much more iniquitous place than it is, for a quest to be like God is at the core of man's recognition of the nobility of the pursuits of truth, beauty, and goodness.

In other words, God himself, through man's best estimation of God's qualities, is THE goal and motivating force in the meaning, value, and purpose of life. God most certainly is far greater, nobler, and more loving than anyone has imagined. But, he IS the standard of excellence toward which most people aspire.

Understanding and coming to grips with the meaning, value, and purpose of your own life sets you on a bee line course to becoming like God through mastery of your own personality, and buy consummate commitment to sincerity and loyalty to truth. By LIVING a life of truth, beauty, and goodness, you are adapting to life's challenges by following the lure of IDEALS rather than physical and emotional impulses.

By expressing your life through continual and unrestrained acts of love, mercy, and ministry to others, you become the very embodiment of the concept of value. As such you become truly religious in personal nature, for religion is devotion to Supreme Values. By seeking to balance and elevate your personality, you imbue yourself with the technical skills of selfhood to be a noble, humane, strong, and cosmically sane human being.

I like to summarize the challenge of enlightenment as "elevating the quality of our problems". All the above challenges have the necessary conquest of problems at their core. There is no doubt that some problems are better to have than others. For example, struggling to find the best investment for \$100,000 is a higher quality problem than struggling to keep from starving to death.

If you do not solve today's problems today, they will haunt you every tomorrow until your problems get worse. Then your attention will be distracted by the worse problem. Only if you solve today's problems today and do it expertly, will you be able to leave those problems in the dustbin of history, and be prepared for the greater challenge of the higher-quality problems of tomorrow.

Only by establishing a track record of mastering such challenges can you grow to the pinnacle of power-personality synthesis that produces a person who IS his soul.

And that, of course is what life is all about.

REALITY-CHECK TEST

The Reality-Check Test follows this page. The idea is to administer it to individuals and groups in such a way as to provoke them to think, and then to research, in order to find the answers. The test is in two parts, and the questions are identical for each. The first test is to be taken without referring to any notes or other sources of help. It is expected to take only half an hour. The second is to be taken at home and to give the "student" the opportunity to consult reference sources. It is expected to take anywhere from a day to two weeks. Copy the forms and give them to people. Encourage them to take the test. Please copy their answers and send them to me. My address is at the top of this article. I love reading people's answers to the two tests.



Bob Hurt is a writer, raconteur, philosopher, guitarist, web developer, and retired computer engineer. He lives in Clearwater, Florida with his wife Maria. He spends most of his spare time studying, strumming his Hofp classical guitar, or relaxing at the beach or a movie with his wife. As he goes about his daily affairs, he often engages others in an exchange of life perspectives. Life is always good for Bob Hurt.

[Bob Hurt](#)

REALITY CHECK TEST #1 — IN SCHOOL

Your Age: _____

Your Name: _____

Instructions: This is a quick test with 3 questions to be answered on this form in the classroom. You should spend no more than 10 minutes answering each question and explaining your answer. Hand in this form when you are finished. If you need more room, you may write on the back.

1. What is the **meaning** of life (explain your answer)?

2. What is the **value** of life (explain your answer)?

3. What is the **purpose** of life (explain your answer)?

REALITY CHECK TEST #2 – TAKE HOME

Your Age: _____

Your Name: _____

Instructions: This is a quick test with 3 questions to be answered on this form at home. You must return the answers within two weeks. You may consult any resource, including your parents, religious leaders, and encyclopedias for the answer, but you must write the answers in your own words. If you need more room, you may write on the back or on additional sheets. When you have answered, staple the sheets together with this form on top, and hand it in.

1. What is the **meaning** of life (explain your answer)?

2. What is the **value** of life (explain your answer)?

3. What is the **purpose** of life (explain your answer)?