

Who are You?

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I recently saw the movie *The Lady in the Water*. (If you liked M. Night Shyamalan's movies other than *The Sixth Sense*, I think you'd like this film. *The Sixth Sense* doesn't count, because almost everyone loved that movie.) *The Lady in the Water* is a fairy tale that involves a water nymph who must locate humans pre-destined to help her by taking on various roles. While one character was considering whether he was supposed to take on a given role, he mentioned that this was all about figuring out one's purpose in life, and he made the point that this was not a quick or easy thing to do.

I agree.

As a life consultant, in the course of helping people to learn inner approaches that enable them to reach their goals, I find that conversations about "purpose" become very important. Why? Because, before I help people to achieve goals, I want my clients to be sure that the goals fit who they are at heart, and that they fit into the bigger picture of the kind of life they want to lead, who they love, and what they consistently love to do.

All of this made me think about exactly how I help clients to understand their sense of purpose. My approach involves the following:

- ❖ Getting clients in touch with what makes them:
 - Curious
 - Intrigued
 - Interested
 - Excited

- ❖ Helping clients to pursue their desires and to experience what the achievement feels like in the moment
- ❖ Assisting them in identifying patterns of enjoyable activities (“I tend to love problem solving” or “I’m attracted to sensual delights”)
- ❖ Helping clients to reflect on moments about which they felt most proud
- ❖ Reviewing jobs—and small, moment-to-moment tasks done while on the job—that they most enjoyed and helping them to understand why
- ❖ Reflecting on “what they wanted to be when they grew up”
- ❖ Discussing and defining what I call *core values* (three or four aspects of yours that can give another person an 80% feel for who you are)

I realize that discussions about purpose can involve religion, spirituality, philosophy, and other heavy or ephemeral topics. However, I like to take a more practical approach.

When we are productive and enjoying ourselves, we are maximally able to care for ourselves, care for our families, and contribute to society. What better, more practical way can there be to finding your purpose or niche in life?