

emotional life skills for youth

IN THE MOMENT-*SENSE OF PURPOSE*

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

- CONFUCIUS

Developing a sense of purpose... what does it look like to you?

Purpose is defined as a strong, stable sense of commitment to something that is meaningful to you and makes a difference in the world around you. It can be found in all aspects of life and can change over time.

Get to the heart of purpose by asking yourself these questions:

What am I meant to do?

What gives my life meaning?

What do I care about?

What really matters to me?

How can I use my skills to make a difference in the world?

Take time to reflect on those answers, write them down, and allow flexibility in yourself to evolve over time.

Why is purpose important?

Purpose increases well being.

People with higher levels of purpose tend to be happier and feel more satisfied with their lives. They have stronger identities and higher levels of self-esteem, and feel more hopeful, optimistic, and confident in their abilities. What's more, they are more likely to be engaged in their communities in positive, helpful ways.

Purposeful people are stronger and longer-lived.

More purposeful people are more resilient and better able to cope with life's challenges. Purpose has even been related to better physical health and longevity.

Students with a purpose do better at school.

Students with purposeful goals find schoolwork more meaningful and tend to have higher academic achievement because they can see how their efforts relate to future aspirations. A feeling of purpose in life even seems to protect students from potentially negative influences in their environments.

Purpose is a journey, not just a destination.

Interestingly, for teens and young adults, just the process of searching for purpose - even if they haven't found it yet is associated with great life satisfaction.

Positive relationships with a caring adult are beneficial.

According to research, only 20% of adolescence have a clear sense of purpose, but those who do tend to be better off in many ways. It also shows that the support of teachers, mentors, and other adults outside the family is crucial to young people's development of purpose, particularly in the early stages.

IN THE MOMENTSENSE OF PURPOSE

REFLECTION

Going through life without ever failing robs a person from learning how to do things differently with perhaps even a better outcome. In fact, there can be great pleasure and satisfaction from overcoming an adverse action. In essence, the rising up from when we fail can bring about great internal joy!

Putting it into practice

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What makes you come alive?

Think about things bigger than you that put a "fire in your belly", things you really care about that you are willing to put yourself into.



What are your innate strengths?

We all have them! Think about things that naturally come easy to you and write them down.

Where do you add value?

Your strengths are perfectly positioned to help solve challenges in your school, workplace, or organization. Focus on opportunities, roles, and career paths where you are most likely to succeed!

How will you measure your life? What are your core values and how can you align your actions and behaviors to support them?

In your moment

Shape your core beliefs and values into a short, one- to two-sentence personal mission statement that represents who you are and paints a big picture of how you want to live your life.

See Oprah's personal mission example on the left and then try writing your own!

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For additional SEL resources, visit: go.illinois.edu/InTheMoment

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