



Chapter 2: Purpose

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1 Purpose & Outcomes

Purpose: To emphasize Purpose as an essential component of leadership for both individuals and communities.

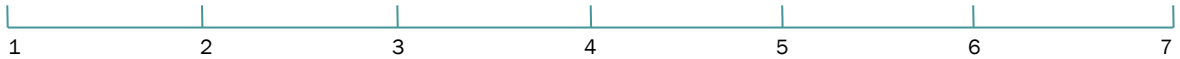
Intended Outcome: To heighten your appreciation for Purpose in personal and professional leadership.

“Purpose is that deepest dimension within us—our central core or essence—where we have a profound sense of who we are, where we came from, and where we’re going. Purpose is the quality we choose to shape our lives around. Purpose is a source of energy and direction.” Richard Leider, *The Power of Purpose*

2 Self Assessment

*Please rate yourself for each of the following items on the 1-7scale (1=no, 7=yes) **before** reading the chapter.*

1. I have a clear understanding of how Purpose relates to leadership.



2. I am skilled at identifying Purpose in various contexts—projects, meetings, relationships, etc.



3. I clarify the Purpose of my tasks, activities and commitments prior to commencing them.



4. I have identified a personal Purpose that is particular and meaningful to me.



5. When things get overwhelming or out of control, I consciously consult my personal Purpose.



6. My organization has articulated its Purpose, actively uses it to guide activities and aligns with my Purpose.



7. I raise awareness in others about the Purpose of our organization, projects, meetings, etc.



3 Purpose Defined

What is Purpose?

The capacity of Purpose flows naturally from the previous discussion of Authenticity. Purpose comes down to answering the question: "Why?" The more authentic we are, the more attuned we can be to answering deceptively simple questions like:

- Why do you get out of bed in the morning?
- Why does your organization (or department, or team) exist?
- Why does something need to be done?
- Why are we having this meeting?

Sometimes we use other words such as aim, goal, intention, mission, or objective but fundamentally we are talking about Purpose. Purpose lies beneath of the surface. Rarely does it jump out from the background and announce itself. In order to deepen the capacity of Purpose, it is important to understand that it is not so much something one creates as something one discerns. Marcel Proust captures this sentiment when he said, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands but in seeing with new eyes." In other words, the capacity for Purpose does not require you to learn a foreign set of skills but instead to practice seeing more deeply into what is already before you. It is a subtle shift; a new lens to glimpse the why behind what you experience every day.

As our Authenticity increases, we rely less on society's scripts for answers and allow our direction to come from within. We can develop the ability to see Purpose in the background and draw it forward. Something as simple as a conversation has a Purpose. As does any ordinary object. The leader's job is to recognize Purpose, make it clear to others, and remind them when they lose sight of it. In the cases when multiple parties represent different purposes, the positive leader is able to bring alignment among them to harness engagement and minimize drama. For *Positive Leadership* we will be concerned with Purpose as it relates to you and your community.

Specifically, we will examine purpose through three distinct vantage points

1. Original Purpose— the most basic expression of Purpose.
2. Personal Purpose— the most individualistic expression of Purpose.
3. Situational Purpose— the most practical and frequent expression of Purpose.

Original Purpose

Survival and Thriving

Original Purpose is the most foundational for individuals and communities and the most basic for leaders to understand. To begin, let's use an example. What is the first priority parents have for a newborn baby? The most bare-bone answer is *survival* (to remain alive, persevere, and sustain) and *thriving* (to grow, prosper and flourish). There is one primary motive to which everything else becomes secondary—to keep the baby alive. Only after survival is ensured can we begin to think about thriving issues like college funds.

The same is true for any community. Faith communities, business entities, non-profit organizations and educational institutions all require resources to survive before they can consider expanding products or services or upgrading facilities. The ultimate concern of leaders must be to ensure the survival of their community. Mere survival can seem like a low bar for which to aim, but it is a difficult, constant, and primary duty. When sudden disaster strikes, the community looks to leaders for protection and will hold them accountable. They will ask, "Why did you not see this coming?"

Beyond survival, a leader can envision the community thriving by asking, "What would it look like if my community was in top form?" This sentiment of survival and thriving is, to me, beautifully captured with Thomas Jefferson's statement explaining his involvement in the American Revolution: "I became a revolutionary so that my children can become farmers so that my grandchildren could become poets." Picture your work community or family. Would you say it is in survival mode? A state of thriving? Or somewhere in between? How have you ensured survival and nurtured thriving? What potential threats to survival must be addressed and what opportunities for thriving can be seized?

"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; and being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy." George Bernard Shaw

Personal Purpose

Once survival needs are adequately addressed, the issue that concerns people centers on the sense that what one does matters. Personal Purpose plays a pronounced role, yet do we have the skills necessary to identify and facilitate it? Personal Purpose provides a sense of direction in your life. It helps guide you in making decisions about where to invest your time and talents. A friend of mine had her favorite quote stitched into a pillow: "Life is not a dress rehearsal." Even when we do not know its exact form, we do contain a personal Purpose if we A) identify it B) choose to access it and C) we conform to it. This work involves looking closely at how we have lived thus far and sifting through the experiences where we excelled, were energized, and felt a sense of meaning. Such experiences do not automatically flash a sign that reads, "Your Purpose is THIS!" Instead, we must work to find the golden thread that runs throughout the fabric of our lives. Personal Purpose is like your signature. It is unique to you and something to which you alone are accountable. It is something that you must discover for yourself.

A first step in identifying your personal Purpose is to answer the questions like: What would constitute a meaningful life to you so that, at the end of it, you could say, "That was worth it?" Under what conditions are you at your best? What drives you? For what can you not resist volunteering? These are the kinds of questions that can help you discover your personal Purpose. Identifying your Purpose is a deeply personal journey and one that requires continual focus and refinement over time, reflecting on the positive and negative meaningful experiences of your life. It is a task only you can do. Others may not fully understand or appreciate your personal Purpose. If satisfying other people is your scorecard for success then it may prove challenging to remain purposeful.

Some additional things to keep in mind:

You have to be willing to risk failure. In most stories of extraordinary personal success, initial rejection and even ridicule seem to be the norm. To hear the stories of Dr. Seuss receiving hundreds of rejection letters of his books, Abraham Lincoln losing far more elections than he won, Michael Jordan not making his high school basketball team and Thomas Edison encountering failure after failure all provide inspiration. Who would have expected Sojourner Truth, Helen Keller or Oprah Winfrey from their humble beginnings?

Situations and people that do not allow you to access your personal Purpose are painful. When you find yourself in a situation that makes you feel like you don't belong, something key to your Purpose is missing or constrained.

Your Purpose is inherently important. Inherent importance means that you may not be able to say something is important without saying, "It just is." What is inherently important to you?

Look for what energizes you. When you are engaged in something purposeful, it may look or feel like work to other people but feels easy, effortless and enjoyable to you. Activities that are a high drain on other people's batteries are a low drain on yours and may actually revitalize you. Look for subjects and activities that naturally draw your attention and energize you.

In response to discussions of personal Purpose I often hear someone say, “But I’ve already invested so much to get where I am. If I re-orient my life to my Purpose it may mean undoing a lot and even disappointing some people that are important to me. Am I to just disregard those things?” This is a conundrum that each person needs to sort out on their own.

I have found wisdom in the Turkish saying, “No matter how far down the wrong road you go, turn back.” Alfred Nobel serves as a great example. We know about the annual prize that bears his name for chemistry, physics, economics, medicine, literature, and peace. What most people do not know is that he earned his fortune from the explosives empire he built around his invention of dynamite. When his brother, Ludvig, died, the newspapers mistakenly reported it as Alfred’s death. He read his own obituary that described him as the “merchant of death who grew rich inventing new ways to mutilate and kill people.” He rewrote his will so that his fortune would go to celebrating mankind’s greatest accomplishments. Too few of us seize the opportunity to rewrite our legacy by discerning, articulating, and fulfilling our personal Purpose.

Situational Purpose

The third and final lens through which to view this capacity is situational Purpose. In the life of a leader, various situations arise that may not evoke an original Purpose (the need to survive and thrive) and may not hold much relevance to personal Purpose. Even in the mundane instances of our day-to-day, a potent leader is able to discern the underlying Purpose in each situation as it arises. I speak of simple tasks. Many of us know the experience of our email inboxes backing up because of emails that we just don’t know what to do with. If we could just get in the habit of asking “What is the Purpose, if any, that needs to be addressed here?” It is a matter of analyzing what the situation calls for and responding accordingly. Over the last year, your community would have had many such situations: product launches, projects, staffing issues, etc. Original Purpose never changes. Personal Purpose is relatively fixed— although it requires a continuous process of tenacious refinement and actuation. Situational Purpose, however, changes from one set of circumstances to another.

Leaders demonstrate the capacity of Purpose when they can see the Purpose in any situation. Amid the pressure to take immediate action, they are able to pause long enough to first understand “Why?” They add a simple step in between the call for action and their response by asking questions that call attention to Purpose, such as: How come? Why is this important? What are we trying to accomplish? Clarifying Purpose becomes a mental habit.

Applying original, personal, and situational Purpose

A leader can use the following questions to quickly orient to any situation based on these three lenses of Purpose. Treat these questions like the mirrors in your automobile. They work best when you periodically scan among them at regular intervals.

1. Original Purpose: What must happen in order for the community to survive and thrive? What are potential threats and how can we preempt them? What are opportunities we can leverage in order to thrive?
2. Personal Purpose: How am I uniquely designed to contribute to the community's surviving and thriving? What is important to me? What is something I'm committed to that would endure any changes in my personal circumstances (i.e. health, wealth, etc.)
3. Situational Purpose: What is the Purpose of the issue at hand? What is needed now?

Purpose, mission statement, and daily activities

Just about every organization has a Purpose or mission statement. Many hours are invested in conference rooms with flip charts as a group of well-meaning executives or board members wordsmith a concise Purpose statement. Once the exercise is completed, the carefully crafted statement makes for great marketing materials, but is largely forgotten in the institution's daily activities. The key is to first discern the Purpose, and then to articulate it to others. Even then, communicating the community's Purpose once is not enough. A community must then fulfill the Purpose.

A piece of advice I received years ago has proved useful over the years: by the time you are sick of saying something is about the time people start to hear it. Don't make the mistake of thinking "I already stated the Purpose so they should understand." Purpose must constantly be front and center and this often requires repeating it multiple times. We all know the experience of "losing the forest through the trees." Life has so many details that demand attention and we get "lost in the weeds." These expressions reflect our constant need to keep our bearings. If a leader loses sight of the Purpose, so does the rest of the community. The work of a leader is to keep the Purpose of the community in the foreground; alive in everything they do.

A useful question

One way to keep Purpose in the foreground is to ask "What's it time for now?" This question helps us tune into Purpose. I might walk into a situation with a Purpose in mind, only to find the Purpose has shifted. For example, I facilitated a team retreat for an executive group that was experiencing some dysfunction. I invested 20 hours into preparation for this 4-hour session. When I walked in the room, my agenda, PowerPoint, and planned activities went out the window because the Purpose shifted. During my preparation, I had one Purpose and once I got into the room it made sense to ask myself "What's it time for now?" based on what I was reading from the group. It became apparent that a hot issue emerged that needed attention. The temptation to stay with my previous Purpose and plan was strong. After all, I put in a lot of work and had a solid game plan. But if I ignored the current need I would have had a well-executed session that completely failed to meet the need.

In order to help discern Purpose, the question "What's it time for now?" is a great question to ask. This simple question helps us reconcile our intentions with the most relevant Purpose of the moment. To enhance your capacity for Purpose, practice turning this question into a habit.

4 Purpose and Leadership

Purpose amplifies social force

Purpose fuels people's motivation. From Kenneth Thomas's book, *Intrinsic Motivation at Work*, two simple quotes capture the essence of why Purpose matters to leadership:

"There is a great deal of evidence that people are hardwired to care about purposes."

"People suffer when they lack purpose."

If people are "hardwired" to care about Purpose and they suffer in its absence, then enhancing the capacity for Purpose holds great potential for increasing one's social force. By tapping into Purpose, we are granted access to one of the most powerful principles of human behavior: intrinsic motivation. Recall from the introduction chapter the distinction between obligatory and discretionary effort. This is the exactly the same distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. What obligates us to do something are the rewards and punishments that result from extrinsic (external) sources. Yet, what evokes one's discretionary effort is triggered by intrinsic (internal) motivations. We established that authority works on obligatory effort (extrinsic motivation) and leadership triggers discretionary effort (intrinsic motivation).

Thomas reveals how Purpose underlies everything that occurs in what we do day-to-day. Most of us make use of a to-do list. Even if we don't have our responsibilities written down, we mentally sift through them during the day. Behind each of these activities is a task and behind every task is a Purpose. A task is a cluster of related activities. The tasks of filling customer orders or preparing meals in a homeless shelter are comprised of several specific activities performed by one person, or several people, to get the job done.

We are well aware of the activities that must be performed. We are sometimes aware of how those activities combine into a task. The Purpose behind the task, however, is often left unspoken or completely forgotten. Purpose informs community members which tasks to perform and why the activities matter. Thomas shares two fundamentally different approaches to how a leader can treat this relationship between Purpose, tasks and activities: compliance-based vs. purpose-centered.

ACTIVITY ← TASK ← PURPOSE

In what Thomas calls the “compliance-era” of management, Purpose played little, if any, role in human behavior. In a compliance environment, management tells employees what activities to perform with little or no mention of the overarching task or underlying Purpose. Employees and volunteers are kept in the dark. The compliance-era is a remnant of scientific management, and it is based on the false belief that people are not motivated by Purpose. They only care about getting rewards and avoiding punishments. The compliance era is an example of evoking obligatory effort and not evoking discretionary effort.

A compliance view holds that people only need to understand activities and maybe the overall task. Issues of Purpose and strategy were left to upper management. Under a compliance mindset, it made little sense to allow people to connect the work they performed to its Purpose. Henry Ford famously characterized this sentiment when he asked, “Why is it that I always get the whole person when what I really want is just a pair of hands?” Though the message of compliance-era leadership has fallen out of fashion, it still dominates much of the way people operate today. The compliance-era is another way to say “managing by obligation” (or authority). People should just do what they are told. We would like to move into a new era, an engagement-era, which manages by evoking engagement (or leading). There is obligatory effort (authority) and there is discretionary effort (leadership) and the ways to approach each are very different.

An example from authors Tom Peters and Robert Waterman explains why Purpose must guide the pairs of hands that Henry Ford claimed to want. A manufacturing plant suffered from a high defect rate (approximately 10%) of a product they built. Regardless of what management tried to do to reduce the defect rate, no progress was made. It wasn't until the employees realized they were making pacemakers that the defect rate dropped to almost zero. The product's Purpose, to regulate the heartbeat of patients, spoke much louder to those making the pacemakers than any dictate from management possibly could.

The nature of organizational life has changed since the industrial age and the compliance-era. Now, members of an organization need to work smarter and make decisions in the moment without having to constantly consult upper management. In a world where competition can come from anywhere, or where resources are limited, communities need every member's creativity and commitment. Individuals must coordinate their activities with the activities of others. Self-directed work teams are commonplace. People often work on a related task across the country, or even the globe. Many employees even work from home— a concept that was unthinkable in the compliance-era. We see just how critical it has become to evoke people's discretionary effort. Since every working moment and decision cannot be controlled by management, what then would guide people's behavior?

Purpose is the “why?”

James McGregor Burns introduced a “purpose-centered” approach to leadership in the 1970s. This approach encourages leaders to share all the needed information, including Purpose, so that people could perform to their utmost abilities. Using the earlier example of the pacemaker manufacturer, leaders should not only guide the activities of putting electrical components together, but also let people know how their work leads to the worthy Purpose of saving lives.

In my consulting work, I can trace just about every problem my clients have to a lack of alignment around Purpose. Sometimes, it's because people disagree on the Purpose but the vast majority of problems stem from merely leaving Purpose to reside in the background.

The capacity of Purpose helps leaders to reveal the “why” behind a community’s vision, direction, values, activities, etc. But before Purpose can be revealed to others, it must first be *recognized* by a leader. Only then can a leader enable people to connect what they do to something meaningful.

“When you discover your mission, you will feel its demand. It will fill you with enthusiasm and a burning desire to get to work on it.” W. Clement Stone

Discerning Purpose is a leader’s duty

A leader must be mindful enough to identify Purpose(s) and then share that Purpose with others. This applies to organizational Purpose as much as to the leader’s individual Purpose. A simple example involves the many meetings professionals attend. The best meetings have a clear Purpose, however I rarely attend someone else’s meetings with a clearly stated Purpose. The top of each agenda should have a clearly stated Purpose for the meeting and the first order of discussion should be to reach alignment on the meeting’s Purpose.

Four key features of Purpose:

1. Purpose ensures the maximum use of resources and effort
2. Purpose keeps us focused
3. Purpose has generative power
4. Purpose is a source of unique competitive advantage

1. Purpose ensures maximum use of resources and effort

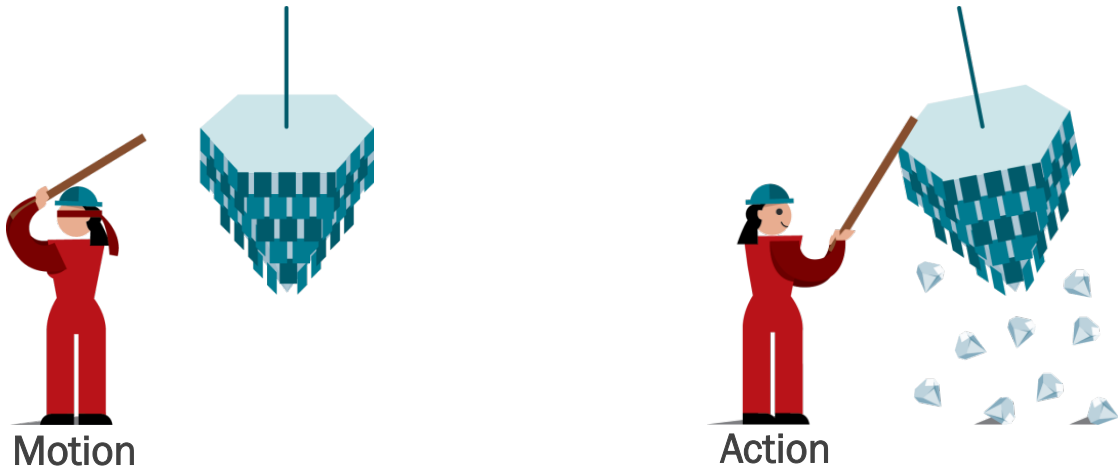
Think of a personal accomplishment that makes you proud (a degree, a promotion, improved personal fitness, child rearing). There were many ways you could have gone about your achievement, but something had to inform your chosen methods. A clear Purpose provides insights for how to best apply your resources. It gives direction when you feel lost or uncertain. Along the way there were distractions, obstacles, and a million reasons you could have quit, but you remained committed to your Purpose and that is how you achieved your goal. This sentiment is perfectly captured by British statesman and writer, Benjamin Disraeli, “The secret to success is constancy of purpose.”

Recently, a field of study has emerged that suggests talent and I.Q. are not the most important factors for personal success. Instead, researchers found that what most directly relates to success is an individual's passion for a particular long-term goal coupled with a powerful motivation to achieve the respective end state. The word for this is “grit.” Grit is applying one's resources. Yes, talent and I.Q., but also time and energy. Grit requires sustained effort through obstacles. What would sustain a person thusly? A clear and worthy Purpose.

“Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.” Helen Keller

Action vs. Motion

One specific way that Purpose maximizes resources is that it can eliminate waste and make our moves more effective. With Purpose, we require fewer moves to produce greater value. One way to illustrate this is the distinction between **action** and **motion**. They both look like movement and feel like progress. Motion can *sometimes* produce desired results, but often leads to wasted effort. Hence the phrase “going through the motions.”



Actions are movements of a different sort. They are guided by a very clear Purpose. Because of that, they are much more deliberate and more reliably produce the desired outcomes. A friend once suggested I visit a particular acupuncturist because he was regarded as a master. Now knowing anything about acupuncture, I asked what made him a master. The response was “A master acupuncturist can do with one needle what a lesser acupuncturist can barely do with ten.” Is this not the case with anyone who is regarded as highly effective? One action can exceed the results of 10 motions. What is the difference between action and motion? Purpose.

2. Purpose keeps us focused

There is wisdom in the saying “Your circumstances can bend your commitment or your commitment can bend your circumstances.” Purpose is more powerful than circumstances or excuses. With clear Purpose order can be found amid confounding demands. When we know something is inherently important, we find ways to stay the course. Others may say, “Wow, that must have been a lot of work. How did you accomplish that?” But you never thought of not doing the work as an option. Keeping our Purpose in mind helps us decide which demands on our time to say “yes” or “no” to.

The most frequent issue my clients raise is that they have too much to do and not enough time to do it. I ask them to do three things. First, articulate the various roles they play and the Purpose(s) for each role. Second, I have them prioritize their various roles/purposes in order of importance. Third, I have them list all of the activities on their plate. Then we consider each activity they listed in light of their most important purposes. This can be a pretty lengthy processes because some people's lists run rather long. Often, the client realizes that many of the things that vie for attention and obscure focus are unrelated to key purposes. It transforms the sense of overwhelm into clear focus.

One client recently complained that he spends too much time writing articles for his blog and managing his social media. I asked why he invested so much time doing those things. "Because, I need more clients." I asked how many of his clients came from blogs or tweets. Then he laughed because almost none of his clients had. For his particular situation, with every ten hours spent on social media he could produce greater results with one hour of simple networking.

3. Purpose has generative power

Purpose, by its nature, refers to something larger than an individual's self-centered, immediate wants. While Purpose endures, wants are fleeting. Purpose enlivens the spirit, but our wants merely appease appetites. Purpose calls us to something greater than whim or impulse, forcing us to consider something bigger is at stake. Actions stemming from a worthy Purpose generate meaningful results. Positive leaders create value by infusing Purpose into their communities. Whenever you experience a lack of engagement from community members, it is easy to get frustrated. In those moments, if you could take a step back and clarify the Purpose for yourself, you can then refocus people on what is really important. You can then re-energize and align everyone's efforts toward a common direction. Even if you put something off to the last minute. Even if you are tired. Even if there are complications that get in the way. Purpose causes us to dig a little deeper, plant our resolve a little more firmly, find solutions we might have neglected. The times in our life when we have persevered or gone beyond what was expected of us are when we were driven by a Purpose.

4. Purpose is a source of unique competitive advantage

We see how a worthy Purpose influences all the great underdog stories: the outmatched protagonist faces the superior opponent. There appears no way for the underdogs to prevail, but they do. In 1980 the American hockey team overcame incredible odds to win the gold. In every Olympics, there are stories of people who have to surmount overwhelming resistance. In such stories, these underdogs have a Purpose— something that drives them to perform beyond what others thought possible. People with a compelling Purpose have a competitive advantage. They are willing to go to lengths that those with a less compelling Purpose are not. To find an edge, identify and share a bigger Purpose.

“The essential difference with Builders is that they’ve found something to do that matters to them and are therefore so passionately engaged, they rise above the personality baggage that would otherwise hold them down. Whatever they are doing has so much meaning to them that the cause itself provides charisma and they plug into it as if it was electrical current. Enduringly successful people—whether they’re shrinking violets or swashbuckling entrepreneurs—serve the cause, and it also serves them. It recruits them and they are lifted up by its power. When that happens for you, a bigger, more engaging version of “you” shows up.” Porras, Emery and Thompson, *Success Built to Last*

5 Purpose Principles

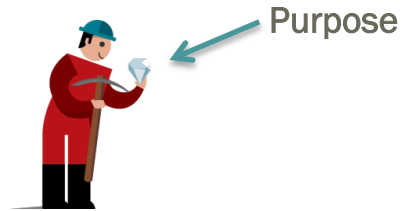
To help leaders better apply the capacity of Purpose, we will explore three models.

1. The first explores the three requirements of any Purpose.
2. The second model addresses the sometimes abstract nature of Purpose by connecting it to more tangible concepts: Outcomes and Methods.
3. The third is the role of positive leaders to align communities on Purpose.

Principle 1: A Purpose has three requirements:

1. Discern:

First, Purpose needs to be recognized.



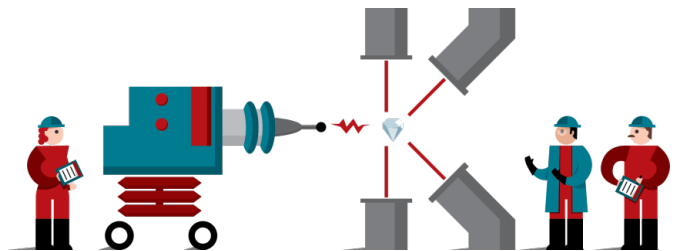
2. Articulate:

Once recognized, the Purpose needs to be revealed to others.



3. Fulfill:

Finally, a Purpose deemed worthy needs to be satisfied.



Principle 2: Purpose, Outcomes, and Methods

It is important to consider the role Purpose plays in deciding what actions to take in order to produce the desired results. Purpose leverages any endeavor, of which there are at least three components: Purpose, Outcomes, and Methods.

Purpose- the reason for doing or creating something in the first place. Of the three, leaders must focus on Purpose first because it informs which methods are most suitable and what outcomes to strive for.

Outcomes- desired results of our efforts. We may also call them visions, goals, milestones, or targets. Outcomes are the future, realized version of a Purpose and they spell out the specific details of a Purpose when it is fulfilled.

Methods- approaches we take to achieve outcomes. Sometimes we call them strategies, tactics, or actions plans. In truth, methods involve all three.

If you listen to a typical conversation where people are deciding what to do, (from strategic planning to where to go for dinner,) you will find that operator mentality focuses on methods first. The focus will be on the “how” to do something. Of course, there are many possible methods to choose. What I have learned to do over the years is resist jumping right into methods and instead start by asking “why?” Why we should do something will often clarify which methods will work best because some methods will satisfy the Purpose much more effectively and efficiently than others. But even then, there is something that must be done once the Purpose is clarified and before methods are explored.

If Purpose answers “why” we should do something, the next question focuses on the desired outcomes by asking “What results must be produced in order to fulfill the Purpose?” Think of the outcomes as a description of the desired future state when the Purpose is fulfilled—what it looks like, what results are produced, etc. You probably have heard the SMART acronym for goal setting. It states that goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. These criteria work remarkably well for outcomes as well. It hopefully makes sense that the better you discern Purpose the more effectively you can define outcomes.

1. PURPOSE/WHY?



2. OUTCOME/TO WHAT END?



Articulating Purpose and outcomes will *then* make a discussion of methods much more productive. Even though methods should follow Purpose and outcomes, this is not to say methods are the least important factor. In fact, the best methods build a bridge from the current Purpose to future outcomes. Without the correct methods, Purpose remains an unmet need and outcomes will not come to fruition. Methods come last. How can we determine the best way to do anything if we do not first know why something needs to be done and what outcomes we hope to realize?



Discern Purpose first, clarify outcomes second, and establish methods third. The Purpose-Outcome-Method process leads to increased alignment, engagement, and effectiveness. In the realm of leadership, organizational and individual purposes are interlinked. Leaders must be clear on their personal Purpose and encourage others to do the same. Everyone must be clear on the community's or organization's Purpose. Of course this is far easier said than done.

1. PURPOSE/WHY?

2. OUTCOME/TO WHAT END?



Principle 3: Alignment of Purpose (Operators vs. Technicians)

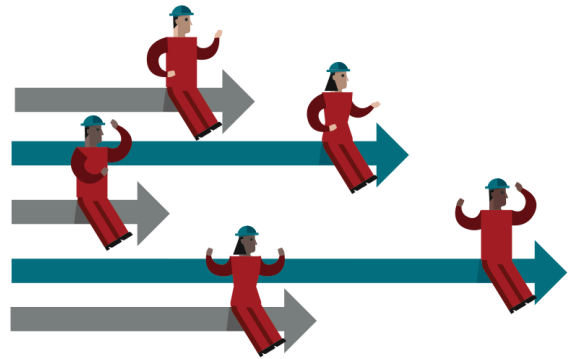
In business, for example, leaders often misinterpret the driving Purpose as profit or shareholder return. Organizations receive tremendous pressure to focus on the “bottom line” and it is difficult to resist this compulsion. To be clear, profit is not a Purpose. It is an outcome. Peter Drucker, arguably the most well regarded business thinker of our time, writes compellingly on this topic. To him, “Profit is not the explanation, cause, or rationale of business behavior and business decisions, but rather the test of their validity.” If profit is not the Purpose, then what is? Drucker provides an answer, “We have to start with its Purpose. Its Purpose must lie outside of the business itself. In fact, it must lie in society since business enterprise is an organ of society.” For Drucker, profit is merely a scorecard for how well businesses meet their true Purpose, which is to meet a need in the “marketplace” better than its competitors. Which need to meet is determined by the entity itself—business, non-profit, individual, etc.

Leaders must be clear about their individual and community's Purpose. This means digging below the surface. Of course businesses need profit, individuals need income and non-profits need funding. But there must be something more to the reason they exist than making money.

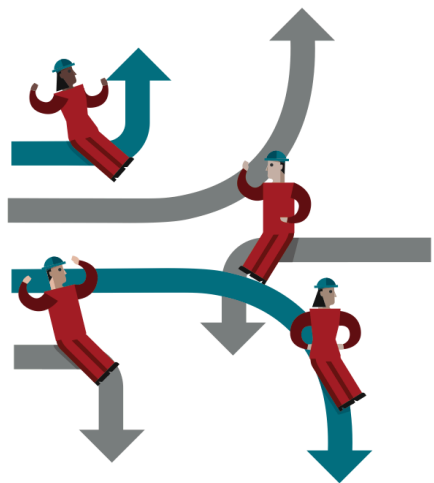
The capacity of Purpose is to first identify the “why”—the community's, the leaders' and those of individual members. Technicians of leadership clarify Purpose before focusing on outcomes and the methods. The role of a leader is to align the community and its resources to a worthy and engaging Purpose.

Technicians of Purposeful leadership are skilled at discerning the essential issues from the superficial and spurious — what is really important, what are the true needs and what must be done?

Communities of all kinds need leaders who can distill Purpose and maintain focus. They see past distractions and drama to remain focused on the Purpose.



Operators, on the other hand, clumsily stumble upon Purpose, if at all. They dutifully put out fires as they emerge while the purposeful leaders search for the cause. Reactive leaders (which should strike you as a contradiction of terms) bemoan problems with such phrases as, “if I want something done right I have to do it myself” or “why doesn’t anybody around here get it?” Effective leaders understand such challenges stem from a lack of unified direction and seek to unite the community around a compelling Purpose. When that happens, no intermediaries are necessary. Each person will know what to do and be inspired to contribute his or her efforts to a common cause.



“When goals go, meaning goes. When meaning goes, purpose goes. When purpose goes, life goes dead in our hands.” Carl Jung

6 Authenticity Inhibitors

We seldom consider Purpose in leading others

There are many things that get in the way of a leader's ability to be purposeful. Consider the following and how they may impact you:

Overwhelm: Identifying and communicating Purpose requires stillness of mind. In times of crisis, leaders may get so caught up in the moment they forget to consider Purpose. When the crisis is over, the community may find it strayed off course. Effective leaders make time for Purpose. Nothing is more essential, especially in a crisis.

Conflicting Purposes: Sometimes purposes are at odds. Considering the various purposes and prioritizing them in order of original, authentic and situational can lead to better decisions and resolve conflicts. Purposes that seem contradictory on the surface can actually be aligned.

Shallow Purpose: Sometimes we are driven by purposes that are inappropriate. What may seem like a Purpose is really a selfish want. In such cases, the advice I once received is appropriate: Don't sacrifice what you want most for what you want right now. You can expand your capacity by identifying a deeper Purpose. Start with the Purpose you identified and ask "is there a more compelling one?"

Self Doubt: Sometimes we are alone in our sensitivity to Purpose. We may have a unique perspective on the situational Purpose that others do not share. These conditions can cause one to doubt his or her validity or judgment. Leaders must sometimes stand alone, because if you do not represent the voice of Purpose, who else will?

Diluted Purpose: Notice the first three letters of Purpose and purity are the same. Circumstances and political considerations often dilute a pure Purpose over time. The purposeful leader frequently revisits and remembers Purpose and reminds others of it as well. Sometimes simply calling people's attention back to Purpose is all it takes; "Let's remember why we are doing this in the first place." I've recently become a fan of the concept called "satisficing"—a cross between sacrificing and doing enough to satisfy the Purpose. In other words, sometimes "good enough" is a wiser decision than perfection. What I appreciate about satisficing is that it makes the decision to dilute a Purpose one of deliberate consideration. For instance, when I know there's a Purpose for getting something done, satisficing gives me the option to decide how much is needed to get it right without going overboard. I tend to develop ideas that are beyond the Purpose and then feel overwhelmed. Satisficing shaves off the abundance so that I can focus on what's necessary.

7 Expanding Purpose

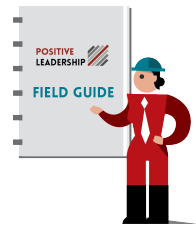
As with all seven capacities, you have already developed your Purpose to some degree. The activities listed in the Field Guide are resources for expanding your level of Purpose. Take time to go to the Field Guide now and do a couple of the activities.

Over the next month you can focus on Purpose by completing some of the activities in the Field Guide: We suggest completing 3-5 of the Purpose Field Guide exercises. Observe your capacity for Purpose by journaling or sharing (with at least one other person).

Developing Purpose in others

Whenever others come to you for input, advice, or feedback, you can use questions to help employees, co-workers, other leaders and family members uncover Purpose. The next time someone comes to you with an issue, ask some variation of the following questions:

1. What are you trying to accomplish? (reveals Purpose)
2. What is your desired goal? (reveals outcomes)
3. What options are you currently considering? (reveals methods)



8 Connecting Points

Authenticity: Clear Purpose begins with self-knowledge and what is important to you. Knowing your strengths and vulnerabilities will help you be more effective in achieving your Purpose.

Advocacy: Purpose (original, personal and situational) set the agenda for the issues you take on and allows you to champion the things you view as most important and you want others to value as well.

Resilience: When the trials of leadership fatigue and stress you, Purpose provides renewal to see you through and stay focused on the highest priorities.

Community-Building: Community members working together toward a common direction are the bedrock of productivity. Purpose provides a common focus for collective resources and minimizes distraction and drama.

Reason: Purpose helps discern what really matters. Sometimes, a truly worthy Purpose can even bend unfavorable circumstances to create the desired reality.

Gratitude: Acknowledge the value of others. Leaders that remain true to Purpose express gratitude for the things that matter most.