

# ON *PURPOSE*

## LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH IN PURPOSE

by Richard J. Leider

Two strangers meet.

“Hi, my name is Dick - Dick Leider.”

“I’m Linda James. Nice to meet you.”

(a brief moment of slight discomfort ensues)

“So, Dick, what do *you* do?”

I have a theory about why people choose the careers they do, and why they often feel so bad about answering the “what” question. Most of us don’t choose our careers. Our careers choose us. It’s accidental or situational; we wind up in our careers on our way to somewhere else. How about you? How did you end up where you are today?

My theory applies to me. On my way to becoming a school psychologist, I became an adult career counselor. This is what happened:

In the mid 1960s, I was in graduate school with my draft board breathing down my neck eager to draft me. In an effort to find a solution I could live with, I joined a unique Army Psychological Operations reserve unit. That choice required me to return to the Twin Cities. Along with the move came the necessity of supporting myself and my family. I accidentally discovered the human resources field and joined General Mills. I worked in a variety of human resource positions ending up as Training Manager. Along the way I observed a large number of successful employees who were unclear about their career direction.

I knew there had to be effective ways of working with adults wanting career planning help, but in the late 1960s there were few books or programs available. So, I started developing ideas, exercises, programs and trying them out after hours. Soon I had a practice after hours, a reputation and a waiting list. Then, I moved to First Bank where, in addition to larger human resource responsibilities, I continued to hone my career counseling skills both inside and outside the organization. A change dinner meeting with Dick Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, fueled my career counseling fires and validated my point-of-view. Actually, *Parachute* had not yet been published and I got an opportunity to see what was later to become a 20 year best-seller. Shortly thereafter, I applied for and received a Bush Fellowship to study mid-life/career renewal issues. I designed my own fellowship (there were few programs available in the early 1970s) under the auspices of the Harvard Business School.

The rest is history. I have been following my career counseling passion ever since through writing books, counseling executives, speaking, creating and leading seminars, and even doing “wilderness inventuring.” I love the work. It fits my talents, passions and purpose perfectly.

In the 26 years since I switched my career focus from school psychology to adult career counselor, I have never regretted the switch. Along the way, I became as committed a believer in the *power of purpose* as Bolles was in the power of information

interviewing. My belief was not based on vague hope. In my work I have seen many, many people choose to live “lifestyles rich in purpose.” I have seen clients enter into jobs and careers that enhance their purpose and allow them to lead fulfilling and enriched lives.

Often, these days, I believe that it wasn't an accident, but destiny that caused me to change careers. Whatever it was, I am fortunate to have found something that I feel so passionate about on my way to somewhere else.

### ***WHEN DID YOU LAST FEEL TRULY ALIVE?***

There has been a standard media explanation for why people like me launch out on our own. We are, supposedly, risk-takers. But I think something even more understandable drives us. It has to do with what, deep down, truly drives risk-takers. I remember when I first became clear about it.

I was in Africa, laboring up Mount Kilimanjaro with a group of twelve trekkers on one of my “wilderness inventures.” Somehow, above the clouds, we got to discussing an existential question: “When have we been really happy?” What moments? What situations? We settled on the big events: marriages, births of children, promotions, that kind of thing.

I struggled on thinking about it, and began reflecting career highs - writing books, creating programs, giving major speeches. But maybe not. In those situations, I was truthfully less happy about the moment than in worrying about how it would affect my career, success and pocketbook.

That evening, camped above 15,000 feet, before the final midnight, freezing ascent to 19,360 feet, we came up with a new way to frame the question: “When did you last feel truly alive?”

Interesting question given that most of us felt half dead from the affects of altitude and exhaustion. Yet, that is when I had a blinding glimpse of the obvious. “I know exactly the last time,” I blurted.

“Now! This is it. I've never felt so alive!”

It wasn't just about climbing the mountain or reaching the summit or having a safari adventure. When we were up there together, and there was no one to help but ourselves, I felt as alive as a soul can feel. I felt on the edge!

Chasing that feeling (aliveness) is what life is about. And the feeling can come from exploring our edges in many areas: mind, body, emotions and spirit.

In the movie *City Slickers*, Mitch asks his 39 year-old friend Phil, who works as a supermarket manager for his father-in-law, “Do you ever think of quitting?” The deadness of Phil's lifestyle and the fact that he works for his domineering in-laws have left him feeling numb.

Phil responds, “Yeah, sure, that's just what I want to do. Start over with two kids to take care of? No, at this age where you are, you are.”

Phil's lack of aliveness and his frustration over his unchosen career and lifestyle reflect a common feeling today: “Where you are, you are.”

Why do Phil, and so many other people today, get stuck on their way to somewhere else?

To enter mid-life (as Phil and I have) is to realize that our options are more limited and that we've got only a finite number of years left. We're very conscious of how quickly time flies. The second half of life seems to be a sped-up version of the first half - a full week slips away as quickly as a day once did! We feel an urgency to clarify what's meaningful to us and make clear time choices today. We've simply had it with spending our precious time and energy on our way to somewhere else.

Most of us with full-time jobs must fight for every hour of free time. In one of John Cougar Mellencamp's songs, he sings that “every one of us has got to choose between right and wrong, giving up or holding on.” For many of us, it's decision time: We must make a serious attempt to live our

dreams or resign ourselves to Phil's plight - "Where you are, you are."

There are many ways for people of even modest means to escape being trapped in an unchosen career and to live more meaningful lives. All of them involve making decisions about what is essential - what our boundaries are.

Indeed, it is possible for harried people to live much as they do now and be much happier. It all boils down to where you draw the boundaries on two questions: "When do you truly feel alive?" "How much is enough?"

As the stories in this article illustrate, many people have chosen to live "lifestyles rich in purpose." Indeed, many have found that struggling with those two questions was the key to improving their quality of life.

Knowing the answers to those questions is a key to bringing our lifestyles and workstyles into balance. It can also be a key to personal fulfillment - to a life that is simpler, less cluttered, yet rich with purpose and meaning.

I'm inspired by stories like these and notice some common threads running through them. People who have lifestyles rich in purpose:

- Have a purpose larger than their own needs, wants and desires - a sense of how their lives and work fit into the larger scheme of things.
- Have an internal compass which keeps them "trueing" to their purpose in life.
- Have clear boundaries around their two most precious currencies: time and money.
- Have a sense of their potential talents, the limits of which have never been tested.
- Have marked adaptability when faced with change - they simply handle it.
- Have a feeling of "the presence of God within."

Given the nation's economic restructuring and the rising cost of just about everything, few of us have the luxury to walk away from our jobs. Yet, according to the Yankelovich Monitor, an annual

survey of consumers' values, Americans are more willing than ever to make a job change or take a pay cut in exchange for meaningful work.

Why then, aren't more of us living this way? Phil, for example, can barely entertain the idea of change, let alone act on his deadness.

How can individuals like Phil create "lifestyles rich in purpose?"

Change happens for two reasons: we confront a crisis or we see for ourselves that a different way of life is more fulfilling than our present one. The latter can happen surprisingly quickly through meeting "evolutionaries" - inspiring people who show us the beauty of simpler, more creative ways of living; lives built on cooperation, craftsmanship, "enough" and purpose; lives that are environment friendly.

The first step is to draw the line at work. We all have a core need to be engaged in meaningful pursuits and valued at work. In an important sense, these constitute the true value of work more than money. I re-read E.F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful* recently and he claimed that work had three critical functions: "To give people a chance to utilize and develop their faculties; to enable them to overcome their egocenteredness by joining others in common task; and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence."

The second step is to read biographies and study "evolutionaries" - people, who as George Bernard Shaw said, dream of things that never were and ask "Why not?"

Early on in the planning for this issue, I sent out a random survey to *On Purpose* subscribers asking for stories of "evolutionaries" - people who were not afraid to ask "why not?" I was gratified at the quality of the responses.

### ***THE "EVOLUTIONARIES"***

Following are some stories of people who have discovered "lifestyles rich in purpose."

**Glen Bobo** writes: Leif Bisbjerg, a friend from Denmark and highly talented carpenter/builder, could have been a highly successful tradesman but has devoted his life to others over the past 20 years as a social worker. Living with great zest and sense of humor, he and his wife have worked in a Danish foreign aid program in Kenya over the last five years building and running a youth polytechnic center. Glen says, “I would like to better emulate his zest and his choice of life paths-less rewarding financially, but richer in purpose.”

**Linda DeWolf** writes: Ivor is an 85 year old artist who has been a friend for over 20 years. He inspires me with his active, growing mind, always learning something new. He is a risk-taker on a spiritual journey. Linda says, “what really impresses me is his positive view of life and how he can readily laugh at himself.”

**Brian Stuhmuller** writes: I truly don’t know many people who I would classify as rich in purpose. For the most part people undervalue purpose, thinking it to be relegated to commitments, sometimes goals. A purpose requires commitments to something larger than myself. Brian says, “I have a purpose to build and create business organizations that contribute to our social fabric while prospering all those, customers and employees and visitors alike, by virtue of their relationships to that organization...If I have heroes, they’re the Ben Franklins, Thomas Edisons and Henry Fords of our history.”

**Tom Thiss** writes: Ruth Stricker, founder of The Marsh, a balance and fitness center which is an extension of her efforts to heal herself from her 17 year struggle with Lupus, is becoming “the first lady of mind/body integration.” Tom says, “I admire Ruth for her search for alternative holistic health remedies and making available to others what she has found helpful for herself.”

**Sally LeClaire** writes: Alan Page, football hall of famer, state supreme court judge and founder of the Page Education Foundation lives his purpose. Sally says, “I respect his values and the way he has become a healthy role model for youth of color and

all youth who work to further their educations. He is living out his vision of mentoring others. By becoming what he has dreamed to become, he is a model of success.”

**Fred Kiel** writes: “I consider the farmer and writer, Wendell Berry, to be ‘rich in purpose.’ I never met the man, but have read over half of his writings and they reflect his purpose. I would like to emulate his life style in the sense that I believe he lives simply - on a small Kentucky farm and grows a good deal of his own food - yet he writes penetrating and moving essays and novels dealing with the common good of us all: our treatment of ourselves, each other and the land.”

**Gloria Jennings** writes: Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children’s Defense Fund, is a passionate advocate for the children of this country. She has worked hard to obtain the education and credentials she needed to do the things that she felt were worthy of her time. Gloria says, “She is a beautiful woman that has a purpose that is not self-centered but is a purpose that will enrich our lives through out children.”

**Larry Christie** writes: Jean Winje Christie is founder and director of the Southside Family Nurturing Center, the largest preschool child abuse center in Minnesota. Larry says, “If I could look adversity in the eye each day as Jean does and still maintain the upbeat attitude that she does, then I would know I have grown into a fully mature person.”

**Nancy Cosgriff** writes: Gloria Steinem, author, feminist activist, speaker, is whole, integrated and speaks what she believes and feels. Nancy says, “She seems to be fearless and single-minded in her cause of changing the status of women. She is brilliant, articulate and writes well, and though controversial, is respected. She also is witty and funny.”

**Rollie Larson** writes: Doris Larson, my wife of 46 years is a model for me. She drops everything to talk about a concern another person might have, and she listens intently with her heart. Rollie says, “I

have rarely known a person with so few ego needs. She has a deep spiritual life and faith, yet she is dogmatic about nothing. She is generally at peace with herself and is the most ‘complete’ person I have ever known.”

**Andrew Stirrat** writes: Cynthia Kemper, President of Beyond Business, a non-profit network of individuals and organizations is committed to the building of community and socially responsible companies. Andrew says, “Cindi has taken some remarkable risks in the past few years. Always a proponent of self-growth and reflection, she often hesitated to take the big steps. In the past 12 months all that has changed. Cindi is ‘on purpose.’ She has contributed thousands of dollars in time and lost consulting projects to get the network off the ground. She glows from an inner sense of who she is and what is important to her.”

**Bernie Saunders** writes: John Holt, author and educator, dedicated his personal and professional life to continuous learning. Searching for ways to make learning more accessible and sustainable was his passion. He was willing, with understanding and compassion to challenge the status quo about what learning and education was all about. Bernie says, “Somehow, he understood the natural everyday genius that embraced each person.”

**Richard Kimball** writes: Sandy Sanborn, founder of The Nature Place near Florissant, Colorado, has been for over 50 years a pioneer and leader in the environmental education movement (before the term existed). Sandy is a total believer in the need to protect the natural gifts of the planet. Rocky says, “Sandy still has the day-to-day capacity to experience awe and joy watching a kid learn, hearing a hawk cry, exploring a fossil bed and telling a joke. In his presence you feel you are in front of a whole life.”

What is your purpose? Before choosing a lifestyle rich in purpose, we must first know what we want. (If we don’t know what we want how will we know if we’ve gotten it?) Before knowing what we want, it’s good to know why we want it. A good way of

knowing why we want something is by knowing our purpose in life.

Purpose is the deeper meaning we give to life, work and relationships. It is the “spiritual core” and it helps us to value and to find the aliveness in all of life’s experiences. For a lot of us the purpose aspect of our lives is the hardest to understand because it can’t really be measured and it’s hard to see.

It is often a major life change that leads people to identify or rediscover the true purpose of their lives. A purpose is something you discover. It’s already there. You’ve lived your life by it, perhaps without fully realizing it. Although when you do name it, you will know that you’ve “known” it all along.

It’s your lodestar, your personal compass of truth. It tells you, in any given moment, whether you’re living your life “on purpose” or not.

A purpose is not a goal. A goal is something that can be reached. A purpose is a direction like West. No matter how far West you go, there’s still more West to travel. Purposes can be used for choosing goals along the route.

A purpose is never achieved; it is continually expressed in each moment that you are “on purpose.” You use your purpose to set your course in life. Without a clear sense of purpose, you are more at the mercy of the outside world. In many ways, it is like being on a ship without a rudder in the middle of an ocean - feeling lost or out of control. Purpose not only helps you stay on course but also helps you stay clear about how you can make a difference. It can also make passage through a major transition experience a great deal easier.

## ***DISCOVERING YOUR PURPOSE***

The following steps are designed to help you get a clearer sense of your life purpose. They build a formula you can use to find out a little more about what you want to do with your life. Be patient. The discovery of purpose can take some time. When you

come to “feel it,” you’ll also know it was worth the wait.

1. Make a list of your talents. This is no time for modesty. Identify three talents or characteristics about yourself that are extremely important to you and write them down. Narrow down each of your talents to one or two words. “Loving, caring, teaching, listening, creating, etc.” If you’re blocked, ask friends for suggestions. For example, “My three most important talents are my listening, my creativity and clear speaking.”
2. Jot down your interests, passions or special knowledges. What are the things you obsess about, daydream about, wish you had more time to put energy into? What needs doing in the world that you’d like to put your talents to work on? What are the main areas in which you’d like to invest your talents? For example, “My passion or focus is on the community, my work, my family, my church, or my special interest in helping people to discover their purpose in life.”
3. Now think about the “environments” that best bring out your talents and interests. In what work and life situations are you most comfortable expressing your talents? For example, “I most often express my talents and interests in small groups, in large groups, as part of a team, while alone, in nature, in a studio, etc.”
4. Now take your answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 and combine what you think are the most important elements of them to make a complete sentence, as in the following example:

“My purpose in life is”  
(write in here your answer to question 1)

“to use my listening, my creativity and my clear speaking.”  
(write in here your answer to question 2)

“to help people discover their purpose in life”  
(write in your answer to question 3)

So a first draft of your purpose statement could be, “My purpose in life is to use my listening, my creativity and my clear speaking to help people discover their purpose in life and to work in a way that reflects my solitary nature.”

Over the years my purpose has evolved to two simple statements that mean a lot to me:

“To help people know, feel and express their essence.”

“To make a real difference in one person’s life every single day.”

### ***THE PURPOSE FORMULA***

SUM (Talents + Passions + Environments) X  
Vision = Lifestyle Rich In Purpose

#### **Your talents**

Skills that you truly enjoy expressing; abilities that come naturally, effortlessly and spontaneously; abilities you can’t remember learning because you’ve been doing them effortlessly for so long.

#### **Your passions**

Problems you strongly feel need solving in the world; issues that you’d love to be more involved in; areas you obsess about or would like to learn more about; activities which reflect deep and consistent interests.

#### **Your preferred environment**

What’s the ideal work environment that would make it easiest or most comfortable for you to express your true talents and passions; for example, all work situations are really values environments that are either good or bad fits for your values, pace and style preferences. Most people get hired, fired, promoted, demoted or find satisfaction based on their ability to read themselves and their environment. A good career fit demands values congruence.

#### **Your vision**

How do you see yourself putting it all together? Lifestyle is an idealized image of how we “see

ourselves” living and working. A “lifestyle rich in purpose” reflects a tremendous integration between “who I am and what I’m doing.” People who are “on purpose” like what they are doing and like where they are doing it. Their lifestyle fits their idealized image (or vision) of themselves.

It’s important that you state your purpose in the present tense because that way it is always current. You’ll most likely find that in many ways you’ve already been living out your purpose for many years and that choices you have made throughout your life have often supported it. It does help, particularly during major life changes, to have *The Purpose Formula* at the forefront of your mind so that the stresses make more sense and can be connected to insights and healthy choices.

You may have several purposes. Repeat the exercises as often as you wish to clarify your main purpose.

As an alternative way to discover your purpose try this exercise. Before going to sleep, give yourself the instruction: “When I wake up in the morning, I will know my purpose.” Place pen and paper by your bed and, first thing when you wake up, write whatever words are there. It just may be a “blinding glimpse of the obvious” - your purpose.

### ***HAVING A MID-LIFE CRISIS ON PURPOSE***

***“Midway life’s journey I was made aware that I had strayed into a dark forest, and the right path appeared not anywhere.”***

Dante was 35 years old and frustrated in his life in 1300 when he wrote the first line of *The Inferno* - describing perhaps the first midlife crisis in Western Literature.

However it is described, middle age remains one of the least studied phases in life.

The President is 46. I’m 48. Wasn’t I supposed to be somebody now, or at least know what I want to do with my life? For the past two decades (since my late twenties), I have been trying to answer, among

other things, why some people come alive at midlife and other struggle with inner kill - the art of dying without knowing it (or perhaps, showing it). During my Bush Fellowship in 1973, I discovered that middle age remains one of the least studied phases in life. It’s perhaps the least mapped territory in the human development literature.

To date, I have concluded that there are no set stages transition points or predictable mid-life crises—that what happens to people is more the result of accident, personal experiences and financial circumstances and the historical period in which they live. The map is not clear. People move in and out of states of purpose and success.

What does commonly happen, however, is a more subtle acceptance of life’s limitations and possibilities. One of two things seems to happen by middle age: we achieve our dream or we do not. Either way it creates a problem. The sooner we accept the idea that life may not turn out as we originally planned, the more important *The Purpose Formula* becomes. Often a major life event—divorce, illness, losing a job, kids leaving home (or returning), deaths of parents, spouses and friends—can bring about profound changes of purpose and direction. These can happen at any point in life, but they seem to mount up in the 40s and 50s.

Writer and director Norman Corwin, age 82, was quoted in the beautiful and inspiring book, *The Ageless Spirit*:

*“I remember now that they toughest birthday I ever faced was my fortieth. It was a big symbol because it said goodbye, goodbye, goodbye to youth. But I think that when one has passed through that age it’s like breaking the sound barrier.”*

The fact is that most of us before the age of forty are put off by purpose. If we’re asked what our “life purpose” is, we think that we’re supposed to come up with a Mother Theresa answer that sums up our entire life, something like dedicating ourselves to the poor in Calcutta or solving the problems of the environment. While some of us do have an overarching sense of purpose, most of us don’t.

If, however, we're asked to identify talents, or areas we are repeatedly drawn to, or passions or interests that move us or give us the most pleasure and satisfaction, most of us can answer this kind of question readily. What we haven't done is recognize that these talents and interests are indicators of purpose - they're compass readings. *Lifestyles rich in purpose* are nothing more than acknowledging these guideposts and using them to organize our time and structure our lives.

### ***THE SECRET OF FINDING YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE: TAKING IT IN STAGES***

Many people find that purpose evolves as interests and experiences change over their lifetime. Often we'll follow one purpose direction (or lifestyle) until we've fully explored it, then we'll shift to another focus. These changes are triggered by age and by continual discovery and clarifications of who we are. It is part of the process of growth and wisdom to discover new "chambers" and find new insights.

If living on purpose still sounds like an obscure or impossible order, think about the chambered nautilus. The nautilus keeps adding new chambers throughout its life as it outgrows its present chamber.

Which chamber do you see yourself in? as we move through different ages and stages, the questions that dominate our growth and happiness evolve. The old chamber feels cramped and lacks room to stretch.

Making a living is one thing. Making a lifestyle rich in purpose is another. When you know your purpose, it's easier to draw boundaries and choose goals.

The uniqueness of each of us must be safeguarded at all times. I've observed that people who are living "lifestyles rich in purpose" are:

*Poets* - they show up willing to share their personal stories, pains and vulnerabilities. Only when one is connected to one's core is one connected to others.

*Evangelists* - they have a vision, can see the "big picture" and are excited, energized and willing to take a stand on something they believe in.

*Wizards* - they understand the meaning of "heart." A purpose is like a heart. You don't create a heart, but like the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*, they've discovered the heart they always had.

*Jesters* - they can laugh at themselves and inject humor and lightness into life and work.

*Artists* - they have a "deep well" of personal experiences and feelings to express themselves and feelings to express themselves from. They can follow a core discipline, yet experiment and deviate from plans.

*Inventurers* - they are willing to look behind every question. They understand the power of actively living in their questions. Their key question is: "What price will I pay for not living in sync?"

The acid test of any life is simply, "Did I fulfill my purpose?" It's not easy to stay on purpose. In fact, the more you probably look at your responsibilities and commitments, the more difficult it seems that you'll ever be able to stay on purpose. How do you do it? To live a lifestyle rich in purpose, start by choosing to act on just one purposeful activity every single day, you will eventually discover the "golden thread" that runs through your life - your personal purpose.

## **THE PURPOSE CONNECTION**

by Nancy Cosgriff

Sometimes when I awaken in the middle of the night and feel a certain "angst," a fearful voice comes up from my innards: "Will I end up being a bag lady when I'm old? Who will support me and take care of me when I'm really old and perhaps unable to take care of myself?"

Now, my daydream reason tells me that this kind of situation is unlikely for me, even though the

economic statistics in this country on single women (which I am), especially those with children (which I am not), classify many of the at the poverty level. So in spite of the fact that I am professionally credentialed and currently have an income far above poverty level, my “bag lady” tape reminds me that this could be me; that actually I’m an exception. Historically, women and “women’s work” have been undervalued and under-rewarded in cold, hard cash - and I too am susceptible.

It seems as if middle age has more than arrived in my life, and with its arrival has come a strong desire to develop connections, to connect my past and current experience with my future dreams. In addition, two years ago I had an ovarian cancer which was discovered in an early stage and removed. Now I am cancer-free and living (albeit not perfectly) in response to this wake-up call to live present to each day. As Stephen Levine says, I’m trying to “take birth” fully by embracing the joy and pain of the “now” and the connectedness of all being. I want to live out of a clearer sense of purpose and build deeper connections with other people and the earth. More than ever, I want to make a real difference on this planet.

As I reflect on my purpose, talk with women friends and read of the experiences of other women, it seems that questions connecting purpose, time and money have particular significance. How do women, and how do I specifically, connect my life and work with my vision and values and still earn a living? In the practical world which devalues much of what is directly life-giving or life-nurturing or life-saving, what is a woman to do?

As I asked a few women friends about “the money in their lives,” I found that the ones who worked in non-profits were struggling to pay bills for basics; they valued their work with troubled youth or infirm and elderly much more than their paycheck did. On the other hand, one friend who brokers mainframe computers and another who consults with corporations on marketplace competitiveness take home very sizable checks - out of which they often contribute to non-profits. All of them believe themselves to be deserving. But they also believe,

and indeed feel passionately, that all other human beings deserve to live comfortably as well, and that the earth must be respected in the process. So, living in that tension, they struggle to work in their different ways for change; for change that attempts to create those purposeful connections - those communities - where wealth is balanced.

I was reminded of these strange inequities as I sat in the attic of a local shelter for battered women and their children, advising the director on how to raise funds from corporations. She was having difficulty raising \$50,000 - the amount she had estimated as the shortfall from her \$220,000 annual budget. I flashed back to just the day before when I’d been sitting in the well-appointed board room of a large corporation for a day-long meeting where the salaries for that day along of the 20 people present approximated her total operating budget!

So where does this leave me? Since I was one of those 20 people, with my feet in both worlds, how do I bridge them, and more than that, help connect them as interdependent communities? How do I maintain my income but not be a slave to it, not let these middle of the night fears deprive me of listening to that other voice, that wake-up call asking me to untie, to unclutter, to risk, to simplify? How do I avoid becoming so assimilated that I settle for less or just settle in to the comfortableness that I am privileged to enjoy? How do I continually discover that imaginative, instinctual nature, that “soul” of mine that Claire Pinkola Estes, in her book *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, compares to the way of the wolf? How does this “wolf woman” ward off the would-be predators of security, success and approval to enter whatever struggle, dark side, or risky business that may lead me into uncharted territory that may awaken my soul and the souls of others? Can I use the creative tension between purpose and security, joy and pain, living for approval and living for my truth to connect me to new paths, new experiments for living and working?

As I take stock, I see that like so many of my contemporaries, I am time-poor. I am rich in income, family, friends, quality of experiences,

some meaningful work and personal learning, but I continue to be greedy for time: time to read, study, reflect, connect with the earth and other people, write speak, explore the world - and to spend more energy in the direct service of whatever gives it life. Yes, I do what it all.

I believe that to give new life to these middle-aged bones I need to make ever new choices; I need to step out and run with those wolves, unafraid, as they hunt for their lives. And I need, as the old Shaker song says, to “come down where we ought to be,” to a renewed connection to the earth and all its creatures, to know that I am important but not all-important, and to experience our oneness in this circle of living. Trusting in that process, tough as it is in my world, I can find myself in the “place just right,” a place from which holding both the hard dilemmas of women’s reality and the hopes of a richer vision, I can help create new, supportive, and life-enriching communities. My simple yet profound commitment to connect with all that lives and the courage that sings it with passion is the new tape I want to hear in the morning.

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## **WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH THE REST OF MY LIFE?**

by Richard Haid

For as long as I can remember, I have had a quest for deeper meaning and purpose in my life. I sensed that *someday* there just might be another career in me where I might do something of greater significance.

For thirty years I had been part of my family’s insurance business, which I ultimately inherited, expanded and successfully managed. I often wondered, however, “was there another career that could offer more meaning and satisfaction?” I

didn’t like paperwork and detail. I did like developing the potential of people. Was there a way to do what I loved to do - full time? What was I willing to do with the rest of my life?

During our fifties, my wife Leslie and I launched our children and now had an empty nest. Although she had occasionally worked part-time outside the home, her primary work had been our family. With our new freedom came a new sense of intimacy between Leslie and myself. When she went back to school for a year of paralegal training I did more of the household chores. Although Leslie found this a bit threatening, I enjoyed the sense of completion and control which was so different from the many prolonged tasks of my insurance world.

I attended a “last-half-of-life” workshop at a retreat center and discovered even more freedom within myself. When I returned home, I knew that I would be starting a new chapter in my life. I was about to become a “recovering insurance person.”

Twenty years earlier I was a visitor at a non-traditional Ph.D. program for several days and felt comfortable but decided that I was not yet ready. I still had memories of struggling in the second grade. Conventional learning and writing were difficult for me. After much thought and investigation, I entered The Union Institute Ph.D. program where I could use my unique learning style and design my own program in adult development. Great resource people from across the country became accessible to coach me. I feel like I have a table of spectacular resources set before me and I only have to ask. I started consulting and leading seminars. My life was accelerating!

I tapped my long-time interest in developing the potential of people as I learned to use more of my own potential. Newly energized, I arranged for an internship at a nearby outplacement firm, where a day a week I was able to help business people start again as I was doing. Finally, with grief and pain, I sold my insurance agency.

I felt like I was “on the road” on a spiritual journey. Using my church, I offered classes in “being your own career coach” and pre-retirement planning.

That was part of finding my way. I continued providing leadership for a local job search support group which has given me an opportunity to develop more skills and the empathic and intuitive parts of me.

My new career is called "Adult Mentor." My experience as a business owner is helping me in researching the life transitions of family business CEOs when they step down and their families continue the business. My passion is coaching persons as they take charge of their lives by renewing their learning and inventing new futures.

I believe that my face glows when I talk about my new career and the fascinating learning experiences that I am having. I have renewed freedom, energy, purpose and meaning. My theme is "What Are You Going To Do With The Rest Of Your Life?" From my experience, I believe that most of us have the capacity to achieve more satisfying lives than we think - especially in the third quarter of life.

*Richard Haid is an Adult Mentor, consultant and workshop leader. His transition story is included in The Adult Years: Mastering the Art of Self-Renewal by Frederic Hudson.*

## WHY THE NAUTILUS SYMBOL?

We chose the unique and beautiful chambered Nautilus as our graphic symbol because, among all the life in the sea, it possesses a combination of characteristics that we as human beings could do well to cultivate.

**First, Continued Growth.** Throughout its life, the Nautilus continually grows, adding new chambers, new dimensions to its life and structure.

**Second, Adaptability.** The Nautilus easily adjusts to extremes of pressure by changing the water and air pressure in its chambers. It can live at immense sea depths.

**Third, Durability.** The Nautilus has survived and thrived for millions of years in the face of profound changes in the world around it.

**Fourth, Distinctiveness.** Inside and out, the Nautilus presents an appearance all its own: outside, a creamy white shell and wavy brown lines; inside, a lining of mother-of-pearl.

The chambered Nautilus is also rare - almost as rare perhaps as those individuals who devote the necessary time and effort to really taking charge of their lives. We hope *On Purpose* will help you, in the months and years to come, to make your way in the world as well as the chambered Nautilus does in its environment.

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