



The Power of Purpose

By Pamela Ebstyne King, Ph.D.

We can discover purpose in many ways. One way is to reflect back on our unique experiences and capabilities through the lens of joy. Think about sources of joy in your life, and how those joys might direct your journey.

1. Sit quietly and take at least 5 deep, centering breaths. In your mind, go back to your childhood. What are some of your earliest memories of joy, delight, or just being really happy? What did you enjoy doing when you were a young person? List your top five activities.





2. Choose one of the activities - maybe the one that is most associated with positive feelings. Draw or doodle a quick sketch. Note a few specifics about this experience or activity that brought you joy?

3. Digging a little deeper—was it that you lost yourself in the flow of the activity? What were you connected to—the moment? The people? Being present and engaged with your body? Sensations? Movement? Creativity? Adventure? Be specific and write a few lines describing the source of enjoyment.





4. Imagine yourself in that moment or doing that activity—just be in that moment for a bit. What stands out for you? Thinking about the activity and the feelings of enjoyment - can you link any meaning to the activity? For example, if you loved baking with your grandmother, what was the source of joy? The connection with your grandmother? Getting lost in the precision required in the baking? Creating? The smells and tastes? If it was playing a particular sport, was it the exhilaration, comradery, or the skill?

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5. What insights into yourself can you gain about what was meaningful to you as a child?

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6. Now consider activities that bring joy in your life today? Make a list. Then list how these activities are *similar* and *different* to those of your childhood.

7. Based upon these reflections, can you identify anything that is missing from your life that you'd like to reconnect with? Are there things that you might want to let go of or change? Can you identify two ways you might integrate these joys into your work or relationships—as a parent, partner, sibling, or friend?





8. Consider problems in the world around you - whether in your family, in your church, or in your community. Is there a problem that needs solving where you might meaningfully contribute?

9. What task could you take on joyfully that addresses the problem?

10. Talk with a close friend or family member about what you've discovered. Ask them to give you feedback on your insights. Share how your joys provide insights into your purpose. Brainstorm with them how you might be able to pursue more joy and purpose.





11. Take an active step and contribute by using your talents and sources of enjoyment. If you liked cooking with your grandmother - maybe you volunteer to bake goods for a local food bank.

12. Evaluate. Sit in meditation or prayer and reflect thoughtfully about what you've learned. Perhaps keep a journal considering whether your activity feels meaningful, contributes beyond you, and utilizes your talents and skills - and also think about whether the activity brings you joy? Does it feel loving? If you feel resentment brewing - you might need to process with a trusted friend, rest, and re-evaluate.

Joy and purpose are found in contributing to others. If you found this helpful, share it with a friend, loved one, or colleagues who might benefit from a boost of joy.

