

Passion: Look for inspiration

April 2015 Newsletter



Ways to uncover your
life's purpose

Hey Mom and Dad:
You're models!

Inspire great minds...
like your own!

e-Thoughts —
Phubbing?



Do you ever wonder why you're "here"? What do you want to accomplish in your life? We're often so busy with day-to-day life that we don't have time to think about these important questions. **More...**



If you're a parent, you have the ability to inspire your kids. You don't have to be President of the United States or even president of your gardening club. Just be you! **More...**



Do you hesitate to share your ideas? Do you worry others might find them silly or trivial? If so, you're not alone! **More...**



Have you ever been "phubbed" or told that you're "phubbing" someone? I've just learned this new expression. What a perfect addition to our language. **More...**

Getting help

Confidential support, information and resource referrals are available for a variety of concerns — both work and personal. Call for assistance for you, your household members or your adult children under age 26, whether they live at home or not. Call or visit us online today!

Ways to uncover your life's purpose

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Do you ever wonder why you're "here"? What do you want to accomplish in your life? What are your deepest hopes and dreams?

We're often so busy with day-to-day life that we don't have time to contemplate some of these questions.

Do you have higher goals?

Not everyone can be Gandhi, Mother Theresa or Martin Luther King. Yet we're all capable of doing something that makes some difference in the world. We can all leave a mark. The first step is to discover what we'd like it to be.

Questions to help you find your way

These questions may help you start to get in touch with your purpose and passions:

- **When you were growing up, what did you love to do?** Did you have to leave your childhood interests behind for "more serious" things? Do you still dance, draw, collect items or do any activities you loved as a child? Some of those passions may be important clues to the "real you."
- **What makes you lose your sense of time?** Are there activities you do that make time fly by? Can you lose yourself in reading or painting or writing? Can you get so involved that you don't even realize that an hour or more has gone by?
- **If money were no object, what job would you be doing?** Take away the pressure of making a living. What would you do? Consider trying some version of your ideal job. Maybe volunteer or see if you can shadow someone who does what you think you'd like to do.

- **What really "gets to you?"** Are you a people person, an animal lover, a wine collector, a cook or an outdoorsy type? What causes your heart to race a little faster: The idea of helping feed hungry children or preserving nature? Again, these are clues to ways you can make a difference.

Try out your passion and purpose

Here are some specific steps to help put your inspirations into action:

1. **Give it a try.** It's easy to make excuses for not trying things. You might say, "I'm too busy," "It's too much money" or "I don't have the time." The list goes on and on. If you really want it, give it a shot.
2. **Stop thinking. Start feeling.** Another obstacle to finding your passion is thinking about it too much rather than sensing it in your gut. Falling in love with a purpose is about feeling, not thinking.
3. **Don't judge yourself.** Are you a perfectionist? Do you tend to judge yourself harshly? Suspend that behavior for a while. Give yourself permission to try something and, perhaps, not succeed. Instead, be grateful for the experience. Focus on what you learned rather than whether you won or lost.

Getting to know yourself pays off

You may feel you're very satisfied with your life, work and relationships. That's something to be grateful about for sure!

If so, save the questions and tips above in case there comes a time when you want to go further in exploring how to "make your mark." The more you experience in life, the fuller your bucket will be!

Hey Mom and Dad: You're models!

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If you're a parent, you have a special ability to inspire your kids. And you don't have to be President of the United States or even president of your gardening club. You just need to be you.

Parents are role models

A positive role model is someone who serves as a good example.¹ For many kids, their parents and other caregivers are key role models. By watching and copying them, kids learn how to behave in relationships, how to make decisions and how to live productive lives.

There are negative role models too. Some adults — including celebrities — are people our kids admire. When they act badly, kids may think that behavior is acceptable. So it's important to talk about the different choices people make. And it's crucial to provide positive role models for your kids.

Be someone to look up to

How can you inspire your children? First, remember that they're always watching and listening.

Be genuine with them. Respect them. Be kind and forgiving. Be ready to have fun. Show them how responsible, trustworthy adults behave. Show them the kind of adult they want to become.

Give kids lots of chances to feel admired and inspired. Here are some specific things you can do to help motivate your children:

- **Work with them.** Kids love their parents' attention. Next time your children need help with homework or household projects, work with them instead of just telling them what to do.

Your attention builds their self-esteem because they feel important when you work with them or play with them. Whatever you can do “with” your kids gives you a chance to inspire them.

- **Focus on efforts — not outcomes.** Children are always learning — in school and at home, with teachers, siblings and playmates. As rookies, they may not get things right the first or even second or third times. But their efforts should be recognized.

Children can become discouraged more from their efforts being overlooked than from actual failures. So remember to be part of the cheering squad and let your kids know you see them trying.

- **Love your kids for their individuality.** We're all “wired” differently. Think of your own family when you were growing up. If you had siblings, were you all the same or different? Did your family encourage your different skills and strengths?

Kids need respect for who they are and what they can do. Some people are leaders and some are followers. Some are artists, mathematicians, doctors, salespeople and so on. Inspire your children to follow their inner drives by supporting their interests and needs.

Need inspiration yourself?

It can be daunting to realize your kids need your approval and that you're their role model. Want to polish up your parenting skills? Consider taking a class or getting some counseling.

Remember: Parenting is one of the hardest job in the world — and surely one of the most important!

¹www.aacap.org

Inspire great minds... like your own!

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Do you hesitate to share your ideas? Do you worry others might find them silly or trivial?

Millions of good ideas never see the light of day because people don't believe their ideas are worth sharing. But when we suppress our ideas, we chip away at our ability to create them.

Flexing your “idea muscle”¹

James Altucher is a writer, speaker, businessman and thought expert. He says we need to exercise our idea muscles — our brains — like any other muscle. It's like mental weightlifting. He believes that building your idea muscle can lead to more inspiration, greater confidence and more success.

Ten new ideas every single day

According to Altucher, thinking up ideas is a skill we can all develop. It takes practice. And it takes work.

Altucher advises — and lives by — this strategy: Think of ten new ideas every single day. They don't need to be amazing, big, practical or even good ideas. Just ideas.

They could include things like how to take three minutes off your morning routine, topics for books you'd like to write, fun ways to surprise your spouse or items people will need to live in outer space. Keep a small notebook with you and write down every single idea.

The point is the idea

You don't have to act on your ideas — just create them. So really let your mind roam free. The goal is to build your “idea muscle” — to stretch your creativity.

It will likely be hard at first. But you'll probably also notice that, after a while, it gets easier to come up with your ten daily ideas.

When you look back at your ideas, some may seem worth pursuing. Then you can ask yourself: “Where does this idea lead? What do I need to make this idea work? Who can help me develop this idea more?” Picking out your good ideas helps you develop self-confidence.

Challenge your brain in other ways too

Another way to strengthen your idea muscle is to change your routines to make your brain work harder. Choose a day when you answer all your emails with phone calls. Instead of listening to music while you're working out, try an audiobook. Find a new way to get to work or the supermarket.

In other words, change your “normal” so your brain has to adapt. Adapting is good exercise. It boosts your ability to create and inspire.

Over time, you can make your brain a better “idea machine”. With practice and self-challenge, you can increase your abilities to think of new ideas, plans and solutions.

¹Information adapted from www.jamesaltucher.com

e-Thoughts — Phubbing?

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Our e-Thoughts feature provides close-up views on topics and areas of interest from everyday life.

Have you ever been “phubbed” or told that you’re “phubbing” someone? I’ve just learned this new expression. What a perfect addition to our language.

Phubbing is “the act of snubbing someone in a social setting by looking at your phone instead of paying attention.”¹ It’s a combination of “phone” and “snub.” It speaks to the growing anti-social conduct caused by our device habits.

Do you phub?

Are you a phubber or phubbee? I guess I’ve been both. Truth be told, there are times I leave my phone on when I’m with a friend and keep checking it “just in case”. “Just in case” what? You might ask. I can’t even pinpoint it.

On the other hand, when I get phubbed, I can get quite angry. It’s especially annoying if I’m with someone I’d hoped to spend “quality time” with.

Can you remember when...

Our instant e-access has made communication addictive and compulsive. I can remember the days of no cell phones and no answering machines. Imagine: If someone had something really important to tell you, they’d have to call again! And, whatever it was, you wouldn’t know “in the moment.”

This isn’t to say that our e-devices aren’t wonderful. Thanks to them, we can go about our lives. We know that, if there’s a crisis or our wives, sisters or daughters go into labor, we’ll find out right away.

Keep track of your phubbing

When socializing, think about how often you check your texts, emails, Facebook, Twitter and other sites. It may be inconsiderate or even insulting to your companion.

The next time you’re out to dinner, at a party or other gathering, see if you can power down your cell. Instead power up your social skills. Connect with people — the old-fashioned way!

¹www.theguardian.com

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