

Foreword

At its most basic, life can be defined as *ceaseless motion in a context of unrelenting change*. For human beings, determining when life begins is currently controversial, but for the sake of this discussion let's say life begins when we slide down the birth canal and emerge into the glaring light with a gasp for air, immediately followed by a loud cry for someone, preferably mom, to feed our needs! So begins a lifelong struggle to survive, feed our needs and gratify desires, while we also move thru a lifespan doing our best to ignore, deny, or just distract ourselves away from acknowledging the fact that every creature born into life is pre-destined to die.

If we acknowledge that every birth, including ours, is eventually followed by death, no exceptions, then we need to ask: "What do we want to do with the time between our birth and death?" Not an easy question to answer! I first posed this question when at five, my grandmother died and I realized with shock and terror that I too, would die. This sad event began a lifetime of searching for the answer to my next question, "Since I am already alive and can't un-ring that bell: *what, if anything, will make my life, or anyone's life – satisfying, worthwhile, and meaningful?*"

Dr. Paul Hatherley

A half-century, plus a decade and some change later, I have an answer. The problem is that my answer is not simple. So I can't say, "Take a vow of poverty, meditate, pray, believe in God or the Universe, or even *love* is everything." Trust me, at this point I wish there was a simple answer. Instead, there are *layers of answers* that start by organizing the complex experience of life beginning with the *basic fact* that each and every human is the proud owner of a *mind, body, emotions and lifespan*.

In addition to the basic facts, each life can be divided into *three segments—personal, relationships, and profession—*and within each *segment of life* and *basic fact* are *internal* needs and potentials that we must understand, feed, and fulfill: that is, if we want our lives to be satisfying, meaningful, and worthwhile.

The problem is that throughout human history, our species has been obsessed with struggling and competing trying to control *external* security, approval, success, and if possible, luxury. We have left everything *internal* to our beliefs, feelings, religions, spiritual intuitions, and all things subjective, vague, and general. What I have done is to identify and experientially define all the *objective* and *universal* needs and potentials necessary to make our lives *internally* satisfying and permanently meaningful.

The good news is that since each step in the layers of awareness and skill necessary to master internal needs and potentials is now *experientially* defined, anyone who wants a meaningful life can build one to his unique specifications.

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The bad news is that no matter how smart someone is, internal development is a big job, and can't be completed in a week. The thing to remember is that Mother Nature loves balance, so with every bit of good news there is always a bit of bad news. Once we accept this fact we can stop arguing with Mother Nature and get on with the job of acquiring all the layers of awareness and skill necessary to feed the needs and fulfill the potentials Mama Nature was ever so kind, and mean, as to bestow upon our unsuspecting heads.

Anyone who wants life to be *internally* and *externally* fulfilled has to define and complete every developmental task beginning with *emotional safety, self-worth, and self-awareness*. Then, we need to define *conscious purposes*, as well as *internal needs and potentials*. In this process, we also learn how to be a *satisfying mate, competent parent and real friend*. Finally, we need to master the activities of *expressing love, pursuing truth, experiencing beauty and developing wisdom*.

Internal tasks begin in childhood when our personalities are formed. For most people, childhood training is woefully inadequate, so we move into adolescence internally hungry, hormonally driven, lost and confused but still trying to pretend that we "know it all." As adolescents, we suffer from not having mastered emotional security and self-worth, and rather than becoming *self-aware*, are usually just *self-absorbed*. Without the foundation of having completed our childhood developmental tasks, in adolescence our responsibilities start to pile-up as we need to define ourselves, choose a career, relate to the opposite sex, and deal with internal needs.

Dr. Paul Hatherley

With normal training, most adolescents don't have the slightest idea how to define their hungers or responsibilities, and neither do their parents, so we just muddle through this stage of life the best we can, and then move on to adult tasks where once again our responsibilities and internal hungers keep on accumulating – while our lack of internal development prevents us from understanding and completing many if not most of them.

As adults, we need to learn how to create intimacy and emotional bonds in long-term romantic relationships, as well help our children feed their internal needs for emotional safety, self-worth, and self-awareness. Of course, when we have not mastered these basic internal tasks for ourselves, it is impossible to help our children.

Later, when our children become adolescents we are often distracted by an unsatisfying relationship with our mate, absorbed by the demands of our career, and have neither the time nor developmental competence to respond effectively to the internal needs of adolescent children. Hence, the birth of a "generation gap" that is so common it has become a sad cliché, and is one reason we are rarely able to fulfill the human potential to *understand, care, master and create* for ourselves, and then *contribute* to the growth of other people.

The normal experience of growing from child to adult without the internal training necessary to complete our developmental tasks is one reason human life is not improving, but instead, is becoming more difficult, complicated, and at least internally, less satisfying rather than more fulfilling.

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Completing our developmental tasks in a sequential and time appropriate manner is essential to growing-up with our self-worth and emotional safety complete, and to acquire the skills and awareness necessary to create our own fulfillment, build emotional bonds, and over time, contribute to the evolution of our species. One consequence of internal education is that we discover a new world of mental and emotional needs and potentials that had previously been unknown, invisible, and beyond our capacity to see or understand.

In completing developmental tasks we learn to feed our *minds truth* and *emotions beauty*, and become competent to engage any problem and *think* about it until we *understand in detail* what is true and needed, and we learn how to nurture. Thru this process, we learn that *adult* self-worth is based on becoming internally and externally competent. We also learn that creating self-worth in a *child* is a different process, and requires parents who are competent to *acknowledge* a child rather than *approve*, and who understand themselves and life and have mastered their own developmental tasks.

Perhaps the greatest change that occurs as a result of internal development is that our reason for living is re-formed. Where once our greatest ambition was to lead a secure and pleasant life pretending that our lives do not end, and believing that success, approval, entertainment and great sex make life as complete as possible, we create a new vision. Now we see that mastering internal needs and potentials and integrating love, truth, beauty and wisdom are required for a whole-hearted existence that is meaningful and noble.

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In this commercial age where the smart people join with the corporate mentality and support limitless exploitation for no greater purpose than amassing large sums of money for power and pleasure, an innocent desire for a noble life may seem quaint, old-fashioned, and irrationally out of step.

Indeed, a desire for integrity, nobility, love and wisdom, is sharply out of step with the overwhelming momentum of our times. If we study history, we soon see that a desire to create a noble existence has never been popular, but today, with the power of technology shaping everyone's thoughts, feelings, desires and vision of life, human beings are rapidly being funneled into accepting a commercial vision of life based on motivation provided by fear and greed, and with our highest goal to feel financially secure, good about ourselves, and pursuing the illusion that pleasant or exciting feelings are all we need for lasting happiness.

Mastering developmental tasks takes us into a new and different world with a detailed awareness of what life really is, and requires. Now, we see what *motivated* Shakespeare, Beethoven, Michelangelo, Jesus, Buddha, Abraham Lincoln, Anne Frank, or Nelson Mandela. In seeing what motivated these and many other people who pursued a noble existence, we can share in their joy and suffering, triumph and tragedy, and understand their purposes, caring and commitment. These people may even become our dearest friends.

At the same time, we also learn how to understand and nurture the living, breathing people closest to us. We have no control over anyone else wanting internal development

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or a noble life badly enough to work for it, but we can always love life and other people even if we are not loved. One definition of a noble choice is to pursue a *conscious purpose* to express love – whether or not we are loved in return.

If nothing else, mastering our developmental tasks and creating internal fulfillment and lasting happiness makes life a surprising adventure where every day brings new insight and intense emotional experiences that plunge us into the heights and depths of what life and Mother Nature offers, and we are never bored. Not only are we never bored, but in the end we will not mournfully cry-out as my aunt did on her deathbed, “Is this all there is?”

Instead, we will know we have experienced all that life offers, fulfilled every potential, understood and shared with the greatest minds and hearts produced by human life, and through it all we consciously cared about every moment and never failed in our commitment to *express love, pursue truth, experience and create beauty, and develop wisdom.*