



Enriching Lives

Self-Reflection Exercise to Help you Lead a Meaningful Life

Find 30 minutes in which you can be alone and undisturbed. Create a cozy, safe and sacred place, and settle into it with a journal, writing instrument, a candle and a comfortable seat. Light the candle, close your eyes and breathe deeply for a few minutes. Focus on becoming relaxed.

Self-reflect on the preceding week and ask yourself the following questions. Record your answers in your journal:

- How did you serve your family, your community, and yourself?
- What were your obligations?
- Did you meet them with ease?
- What ethical tests did you face, and how did you deal with them?

- What did you do this week for the sake of your livelihood?
- What did you do to maintain your health?
- What did you need to support yourself?
- Did you get it? (Note your concerns and anxieties).

- What actions did you take solely for the purpose of creating more joy in your life and in the world?
- What were your greatest pleasures?
- What were your strongest desires?
- Where you able to realize them?

- What beneficial activities did you engage in, such as yoga, meditation, prayer, chanting, spiritual reading or self-inquiry?
- Did you find a feeling of freedom?
- Which areas of your life feel constricted or burdened?
- What do you need to do to liberate yourself?

Analyze the balance between your responses. Looking at what you have written, notice where your emphasis was in the previous week. Which parts of your life were unattended to? Are you working too hard in one area? Not hard enough? What are the consequences of your priorities?

Formulate a simple statement about the manner in which you live your life. An example could be: "This week, I worked hard to meet my work obligations and felt burdened. I took most pleasure from my friendships. I did not find time to work toward acceptance of difficult situations."

Formulate an intention for the coming week. You may develop some ideas based on your responses to the previous week that you feel need more attention. Record your intention in your journal. Then say it to yourself-first aloud, then inwardly. Close your journal, blow out the candle and ease into your day with a new understanding of your life's purpose.

Taking time each week to think about your life's purpose and whether you are living according to your life's values, will enable you to see how your life's priorities are constantly shifting and provide you with the opportunity to trouble-shoot whenever unease or unhappiness arise.

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