

ENGLISH · TIẾNG VIỆT

LIVE WITH PURPOSE

SỐNG VỚI MỤC ĐÍCH

Meaning, Mind and the Dhamma at Work
Ý nghĩa, Tâm và Giáo pháp trong công việc

10 everyday
stories

100 Q&A

10 câu chuyện
đời thường

Everyday stories · Simple science · Timeless wisdom
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BHIKKHU VISUDDHAMMA

With Dhammapada verses, Nikāya suttas and modern psychology
Kèm kệ Pháp Cú, kinh Nikāya và tâm lý học hiện đại

LIVE WITH PURPOSE

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Meaning, Mind and the Dhamma at Work



How to find meaning, direction and passion in what you do, with evidence from psychology and teachings from the Dhammapada and the Nikāyas

Bhikkhu Visuddhamma

Houston, Texas · 2026

About This Book

Live with Purpose is written for students, teachers, managers and Dhamma practitioners. It draws on research into purpose, meaning and passion at work, including the Harvard Business Review collection *Purpose, Meaning, and Passion*, and on emotional intelligence at work. The book has an introduction, eight chapters and a closing, and it combines four layers.

- **Evidence.** Each argument is tied to a named study or author, with full references and links at the end of every chapter.
- **The Dhamma.** Relevant verses from the Dhammapada and discourses from the Nikāyas are placed beside the psychology, so that modern findings and the Buddha's teaching can be read side by side.
- **The Professor's Comment.** Every chapter includes a section on psychological–religious reactions: how the mind reacts, automatically or wisely, when work and faith meet difficulty.
- **Learning tools.** Each chapter opens with an ordinary story from daily life and closes with a summary, ten review questions with answers, and five open questions for personal reflection.

The style is deliberately economical: short claims, clear evidence, practical consequences. The aim is not to make work a grand mission, but to help the reader see clearly what fits, what has shifted, and what small adjustment could restore direction.

How to Use This Book

Read one chapter a week. Begin with the story, because a concrete case makes the principle easier to recognise in your own life. Study the figures, which compress each chapter's main idea

into one picture. Read the verses slowly, preferably aloud. Then close the book and answer the review questions from memory before checking the answers. Write your replies to the open questions by hand; the act of writing turns a vague feeling into an observation you can test.

Teachers can use the review questions as a quiz and the open questions as discussion prompts. Study groups can take one open question per meeting.

The Professor's Comment: Psychological–Religious Reactions

The thread running through this book is the author's framework of psychological–religious reactions. It begins from a simple observation found both in the suttas and in modern psychology: we rarely suffer from events alone. We suffer from the reaction that follows them.

In the Honey-Cake Discourse (MN 18), Venerable Mahākaccāna describes the chain: contact gives rise to feeling; what one feels, one perceives; what one perceives, one thinks about; what one thinks about, one proliferates. Psychologists Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman described the same sequence in modern terms as appraisal: the meaning we assign to an event shapes the stress we feel. Research on religious coping led by Kenneth Pargament adds a further point. When believers face a crisis, their faith can work in two directions. Positive religious coping, such as seeking spiritual support or finding a benevolent meaning, is associated with better adjustment. Negative religious coping, such as feeling punished or abandoned, is associated with greater distress.

The author's framework joins these strands. At every point of friction, at work or at home, the mind reaches a fork. One route is the automatic reaction: grasping, aversion, the second arrow of added mental pain, and in religious life the distorted belief that one is cursed, unworthy or forsaken. The other route is the mindful response: pausing, knowing the feeling as feeling, applying wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), and acting from values. Faith, rightly held, becomes a resource for the second route rather than a weapon for the first.

Psychological-Religious Reactions: Two Routes

The Professor's Comment, built on MN 18, SN 36.6 and research on religious coping

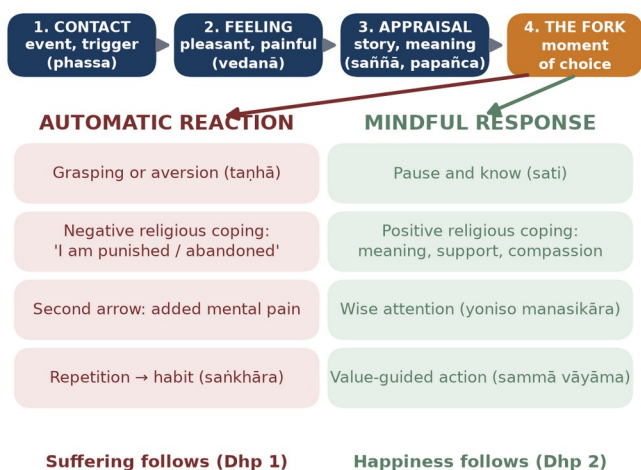


Figure 1. The two routes of psychological–religious reaction. Every chapter applies this model to its own topic.

Each chapter's "Professor's Comment" section applies this model to a specific situation: losing passion, feeling unseen, receiving criticism, guiding a team. The tables show the

automatic reaction, the mindful response, and the teaching that supports it.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Dhammapada verses are quoted from the translation by Acharya Buddharakkhita (Buddhist Publication Society, 1985), reproduced for free distribution via Access to Insight. Sutta summaries follow the translations of Bhikkhu Sujato (SuttaCentral) and Thanissaro Bhikkhu (Access to Insight). Psychological research is cited by author and year, with links in each chapter's reference list.

DISCLAIMER

This is personal and professional development material. It is not a clinical diagnosis and does not replace care from a licensed health professional. If you experience persistent exhaustion, low mood or distress, seek qualified support.

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INTRODUCTION

When the Work You Do No Longer Fits



"Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought."

Dhammapada, verse 1

A Story from Daily Life: The Lunch Box

Every morning at six, Lan packs two lunch boxes in her kitchen in southwest Houston: one for her husband, one for herself. She has worked as a pharmacy technician for eleven years. The pay is steady, her manager is fair, and nobody has complained about her work. Yet for months she has driven home feeling that the day has simply evaporated.

One Thursday an elderly Vietnamese customer came to the counter holding four bottles of pills and a crumpled discharge sheet from the hospital. He could not read the English labels. Lan sat with him for ten minutes, wrote the schedule in Vietnamese on an index card, and drew a small sun and moon next to each dose. The next week his daughter came in to say thank you: her father had taken every dose correctly for the first time.

Nothing about Lan's job had changed. The tasks, the hours and the salary were the same. What changed was that she could see, for once, the effect of her work on a particular person. That evening, packing the next day's lunch boxes, she noticed she was not tired in the same way.

Lan's story is the subject of this book. The feeling of emptiness at work rarely comes from one dramatic failure. More often it comes from a quiet disconnection between what we do, what we value, and what our work produces in the lives of others.



Figure I.1. Lan writes a medication schedule in Vietnamese, with a sun and a moon for each dose.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Recognise the three common signs of a mismatch between a person and their work.
- Understand purpose as a relationship among values, actions and effects, rather than a fixed discovery.
- See how the mind's reaction to a mismatch can either deepen suffering or open a path to adjustment.

The Problem: Stable Job, Unclear Meaning

The document is finished and the inbox is empty, yet something does not fall into place. You do what is expected but

no longer clearly see what each task is for. This feeling does not always follow a failure. It often appears when the position is stable, the team functions and nobody has identified a problem.

Two forces usually explain it. First, **you may have changed**. Responsibilities, health, family, age or a recent experience alter what you need from work and what you are willing to give. Second, **the workplace may have changed**. A new manager, a reorganisation or a more competitive culture can alter your relationship with tasks you once understood and accepted.

Neither force requires a dramatic response. John Coleman (2017) argues that purpose rarely arrives as a sudden revelation; it is built by connecting what you value to what you do and to the effect that work produces. You can review that connection without turning your job into a grand mission. Meaning can lie in learning a skill, solving a problem well, caring for a relationship, or sustaining a life that matters.

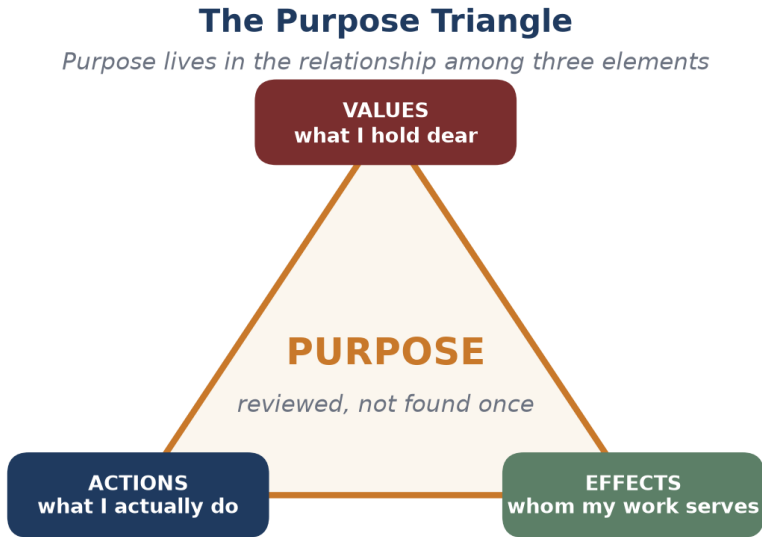


Figure I.2. The Purpose Triangle. Purpose is not an object hidden somewhere; it is the quality of the relationship among values, actions and effects.

CASE NOTE: MARTA, PURCHASING TECHNICIAN

Marta had spent months approving orders without looking up from her screen. She began talking to the warehouse team to learn which problems her decisions prevented. She changed two purchasing criteria; incidents fell, and she once again saw the usefulness of her work. Like Lan, she did not change jobs. She changed her line of sight.



Figure I.3. The task is finished, yet the people the work serves remain out of sight.

Three Signs of a Mismatch

Sign	What it looks like	What it usually signals
You finish tasks but cannot name their effect	"I sent the report, but I don't know who reads it."	The link between action and effect is broken
Your personal priorities no longer fit the role	"I need evenings with my children, but the job assumes I am always available."	You have changed; the role has not
A once-natural work relationship now takes great effort	"I used to enjoy meetings with my manager; now I rehearse them."	The workplace or relationship has changed

Reviewing your purpose does not mean forcing yourself to feel enthusiastic all day. It means observing honestly what fits, what has shifted, and what small adjustment might restore direction.

EVIDENCE BOX: MEANING IS MEASURABLE

Psychologist Michael Steger and colleagues (2006) developed the Meaning in Life Questionnaire, which separates two things: the **presence** of meaning (feeling that life makes sense) and the **search** for meaning (actively looking for it). The two can coexist. A person like Lan may score low on presence and high on search: a sign not of failure, but of readiness to adjust. Viktor Frankl, writing after surviving the Nazi camps, argued that the will to meaning is a primary human motivation, more basic than the pursuit of pleasure or power (Frankl, 1959/2006).

The Dhamma Perspective**Voices from the Dhammapada**

The opening verses of the Dhammapada place the mind at the source of experience. The same job can feel empty or full depending on the mind that meets it.

Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts suffering follows him like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox.

Dhammapada, verse 1

Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.

Dhammapada, verse 2

This is not a claim that external conditions do not matter. Pay, workload and fairness are real. The verses point to the part of the

situation that is always within reach: the quality of mind with which we act.

One truly is the protector of oneself; who else could the protector be? With oneself fully controlled, one gains a mastery that is hard to gain.

Dhammapada, verse 160

From the Nikāyas

In the Discourse to the Kālāmas (AN 3.65), the Buddha advises the people of Kesaputta not to accept a teaching merely because of tradition, authority, reasoning or a teacher's reputation. Instead: "when you know for yourselves" that certain things lead to harm and suffering, give them up; when you know that they lead to welfare and happiness, take them up. The same principle applies to purpose. Do not accept a borrowed definition of a meaningful career. Observe your own experience, test it, and keep what leads to welfare.

The Professor's Comment: Reacting to a Mismatch

When a person first notices a mismatch, the mind reacts quickly. The automatic reaction tends to take one of two forms. One is aversion: "I hate this job; I must leave." The other is a negative religious reaction: "I must have bad kamma; this is my punishment," or "God has forgotten me here." Both reactions add a second layer of suffering to the original discomfort, and both close the door to small, practical adjustments.

The mindful response treats the mismatch as information. It asks, without panic: What has changed in me? What has changed in the workplace? Which of the three signs is present? In

Buddhist terms, the feeling of emptiness is a *vedanā*, a feeling tone, not a verdict. Kamma, rightly understood, is not fate but intentional action (AN 6.63), which means the present moment is always a place where new action can begin.

Situation	Automatic reaction	Mindful response	Supporting teaching
The day feels empty	"My life is wasted."	"This is an unpleasant feeling. What exactly is missing today?"	Dhp 1–2: mind precedes states
A role no longer fits	"I am being punished by my past kamma."	"Kamma is intention now. What skilful action is open to me?"	AN 3.65: know for yourselves
A relationship is strained	"Everyone is against me."	"Contact led to feeling, then to a story. Is the story accurate?"	MN 18: the chain of proliferation

PRACTICE: THE THREE-MINUTE CHECK

At the end of one working day this week, sit for three minutes. Breathe naturally. Ask three questions and write one line for each: (1) What did I do today? (2) Whom did it serve? (3) Which part felt like mine?

Chapter Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- A feeling of emptiness at work often appears in stable jobs; it signals disconnection, not necessarily failure.
- Two forces cause mismatch: you change, or the workplace changes.
- Purpose is a relationship among values, actions and effects (Coleman, 2017), and it can be reviewed.
- Three signs of mismatch: unknown effects, shifted priorities, effortful relationships.
- Psychology distinguishes the presence of meaning from the search for meaning (Steger et al., 2006).
- Dhammapada 1–2: the quality of mind shapes the quality of experience.
- AN 3.65: test your own experience rather than borrowing someone else's definition of meaning.
- The Professor's Comment: treat the mismatch as a feeling and as information, not as a verdict or a punishment.

Review Questions and Answers

1. According to this chapter, when does the feeling of mismatch typically appear?

Often when the job is stable and no specific problem has been identified, not only after a failure.

2. What are the two forces that usually explain a mismatch?

A change in the person (responsibilities, health, family, age) and a change in the workplace (new manager, reorganisation, culture).

3. How does John Coleman describe purpose?

As something built by relating what you value to what you do and to the effect your work produces, rather than something suddenly discovered.

4. Name the three elements of the Purpose Triangle.

Values (what I hold dear), actions (what I actually do) and effects (whom my work serves).

5. What are the three signs of a mismatch?

Finishing tasks without knowing their effect; personal priorities that no longer fit the role; great effort needed to maintain a once-natural work relationship.

6. What changed for Lan in the opening story?

Not her job, but her ability to see the effect of her work on a specific person.

7. What two dimensions does the Meaning in Life Questionnaire measure?

The presence of meaning and the search for meaning.

8. What does Dhammapada verse 2 say follows a person who speaks or acts with a pure mind?

Happiness follows him "like his never-departing shadow."

9. What does the Kālāma Sutta (AN 3.65) advise about accepting teachings?

Not to accept them merely on tradition or authority, but to know for oneself which things lead to harm and which lead to welfare.

10. In the Professor's Comment, what is the mindful way to treat a feeling of emptiness?

As a feeling tone (vedanā) and as information to investigate, not as a verdict on one's life or a punishment.

Questions for Reflection

1. **Think of a recent workday that felt empty. What, specifically, was missing: effect, fit, or relationship?**

2. **Which has changed more in the last five years, you or your workplace? Give one concrete example.**

3. **Describe one moment, like Lan's, when you clearly saw the effect of your work on another person. What made it visible?**

4. **When you face difficulty at work, does your faith tend to comfort you or accuse you? How would you like it to function?**

5. If purpose is built rather than found, what is one small "brick" you could lay this week?

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CHAPTER 1

Where Meaning Comes From



"Health is the most precious gain and contentment the greatest wealth."

Dhammapada, verse 204

A Story from Daily Life: Two Bus Drivers

Hùng and Marcus drive the same city bus route on alternate shifts. They earn the same wage, wear the same uniform and face the same traffic on the same highway. Marcus counts the days to his retirement. Hùng, who is fifty-eight, says he likes his job.

When a reporter from a neighbourhood newsletter asked him why, Hùng did not mention the pay. He said he knows the names of twelve regular passengers. He knows that the woman who boards at 6:42 works the early shift at a nursing home, and that if he waits ten seconds for her she will not lose an hour's wages. He had learned, over the years, how to calm a frightened child and how to talk down an angry passenger. "I'm not just driving," he said. "I'm getting people to the places where their lives happen."

Marcus heard the story and was irritated at first. Then he began to notice his own regulars. A month later he admitted that the job "felt shorter." The wage had not moved. What had changed was the meaning he drew from the same hours.



Figure 1.1. Hùng waits ten seconds for a regular passenger. The wage is the same; the meaning is not.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain why pay alone does not account for satisfaction at work.
- Identify the eight sources of meaning described by Hansen and Keltner.
- Apply the Buddha's four supports of welfare (AN 8.54) to a modern working life.

Pay Does Not Explain the Whole Experience

Pay meets an obvious need. It allows you to pay for a home, care for others and organise your life. But it cannot explain why the same workday leaves one person satisfied and another empty.

Morten Hansen and Dacher Keltner (2012) distinguish between the meaning a person derives from work and the value of the task considered on its own. A simple activity can gain importance through the relationships, decisions and consequences

surrounding it. There is no universal source of meaning. For one person, the chance to learn is decisive; for another, autonomy; for a third, belonging to a team that counts on them.

EVIDENCE BOX: MONEY AND WELL-BEING

In a study of 450,000 responses from U.S. residents, Daniel Kahneman and Angus Deaton (2010) found that life evaluation rose steadily with income, but day-to-day emotional well-being stopped improving beyond roughly \$75,000 a year. Later work using real-time experience sampling (Killingsworth, Kahneman & Mellers, 2023) found that for most people happiness continues to rise with income, while for the least happy fifth it levels off. The economic lesson is the same in both cases: income matters, but it explains only part of the variation in how people feel. The remainder is explained by what work means to them, the people they work with, and the state of their own minds.

Eight Sources of Meaning at Work



After Hansen & Keltner (2012)

Figure 1.2. Eight possible sources of meaning at work. Few jobs offer all eight; it is enough to find the one or two that weigh most for you.

Source	What it offers	A question to ask yourself
Purpose	Contributing to something beyond yourself	Who benefits from what I do?
Learning	Expanding abilities and options	What am I better at than a year ago?
Achievement	Concrete gains and progress	What did I finish well this month?
Status	Social recognition	Who recognises my contribution?
Power	Influence and responsibility	Which decisions do I shape?
Community	Belonging to a group	Who can I count on?
Action	Seeing that decisions have effects	Where did my choice change something?
Autonomy	Room for judgement	What can I decide without permission?

You do not need all eight sources for your job to have meaning. Identify the one that truly carries weight for you, then check whether your role offers it, even modestly.

CASE NOTE: SALMA, BILLING ADMINISTRATOR

At a consultancy firm, Salma saw nothing but corrections and repeated figures. When her manager allowed her to organise the notification process for clients, she reduced mistakes and began to value accuracy as a concrete way to protect the whole team's work. The source that unlocked meaning for her was action: seeing that her decisions had effects.

Contributing to Something Greater

Contribution need not take the form of a large cause. It can mean making a decision easier, preventing harm, making a service accessible, or allowing someone else to work with fewer obstacles. The distance between your desk and the final beneficiary can hide this relationship. When you see only forms, calls or incidents, the result becomes abstract and the task seems enclosed within itself.

Getting closer to the effect does not require dramatising it. It means knowing what problem the service solves, what decision a report makes easier, or what risk a careful check prevents. A technical support team may never meet patients or students, yet keeping a system running allows others to receive care or teach a class.

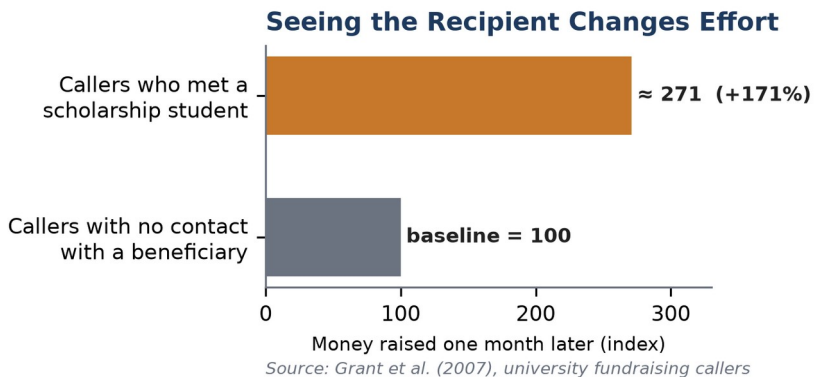


Figure 1.3. In a field experiment, fundraising callers who spent a few minutes with a student whose scholarship they funded raised far more money a month later.

EVIDENCE BOX: CONTACT WITH BENEFICIARIES

Adam Grant and colleagues (2007) studied university fundraising callers. Callers who had a brief, personal conversation with a scholarship recipient spent 142 percent more time on the phone and raised 171 percent more money in the following month than callers who did not. Seeing the recipient made the effect of the work real.

An indirect contribution is still a contribution, but it should not be exaggerated. If a product harms its users or contradicts your values, a new narrative will not resolve the conflict. You can also find purpose in the way you do a task: listening attentively, explaining without humiliating, or leaving a process easier to understand.

Elevated purpose	Everyday purpose
A broad, visible transformation	A specific, concrete form of help
"We are ending hunger."	"I made sure this family's order arrived complete."
Inspires but can feel distant	Close at hand but easy to overlook

Both can guide your work; neither justifies ignoring the real conditions of the job.

Learning Also Gives Direction

Learning brings meaning when it expands your capacity to understand and act. Not every task must excite you if you can name the skill you are developing. Learning is not about collecting courses but about gaining judgement, precision or independence. It also opens future options: a capacity that seems

secondary today may later allow you to take on new responsibility.

Distinguish learning from merely enduring a situation in the hope that it will someday prove useful. For learning to give direction, you must identify it, practise it and apply it. If, over a long period, you cannot name anything you are learning, the role may no longer offer sufficient growth.

CASE NOTE: LEIRE, LOGISTICS MANAGER

Leire felt trapped by daily reports. She began analysing the patterns behind delivery delays and shared them with the operations team. Within weeks she was invited to help plan routes. The reports did not become exciting, but her role changed from recording what had happened to interpreting it.

WORKSHEET: WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING HERE?

- A capacity I am actively practising:
- A task that allows me to use it:
- A person I can learn from:
- One practical application for next week:

Achievement, Belonging and Recognition

An achievement need not appear at a ceremony. Solving a problem, delivering something better than expected or maintaining a demanding standard gives a legitimate sense of progress. Belonging works differently. Robert Putnam (2000) showed how shared spaces sustain relationships that cannot be reduced to immediate usefulness. At work, belonging means

being able to ask for help, share information and know that your presence matters. It does not mean getting along with everyone or turning the office into a family.

Recognition is most useful when it is precise. A generic "good job" helps less than naming the decision, effort or conduct that made a difference. When Boubacar, a maintenance technician, prepared a backup system that prevented a service breakdown, the recognition made a hidden contribution visible, and colleagues began asking for his advice.

EVIDENCE BOX: THE NEED TO BELONG

Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary (1995) reviewed decades of studies and concluded that the need to form and maintain lasting, positive relationships is a fundamental human motivation. A later meta-analysis of 148 studies (Holt-Lunstad, Smith & Layton, 2010) found that people with stronger social relationships had a 50 percent greater likelihood of survival over the study periods. Belonging at work is not a luxury; it is part of health.

Autonomy and Visible Action

Autonomy does not mean working without limits or rejecting coordination. It means having enough room to decide how to respond to the demands of your role. Daniel Pink (2009) identifies autonomy as a core source of intrinsic motivation, building on self-determination theory, which holds that people flourish when three needs are met: autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Autonomy needs clear limits: what you may decide, what you must consult on, and what result is expected. It also needs resources: information, time, tools and authority. You can

negotiate it through a specific request. Instead of demanding freedom in the abstract, explain which decision you want to take on, what information you will use, and how you will check whether it worked.

WHAT YOU CAN OFTEN DECIDE WITHOUT ASKING PERMISSION

- The order of some tasks.
- The most suitable tool or method.
- How to report on progress.
- When to ask for support.
- The criterion you will use to spot a problem.

The Dhamma Perspective

Voices from the Dhammapada



Figure 1.4. Money sits on one side of the scale; family, learning, friendship and growth sit on the other.

Health is the most precious gain and contentment the greatest wealth. A trustworthy person is the best kinsman, Nibbana the highest bliss.

Dhammapada, verse 204

The verse ranks forms of wealth. Money is not listed. Health, contentment and trustworthy relationships rank higher, which matches the modern finding that income explains only part of well-being.

Riches ruin only the foolish, not those in quest of the Beyond. By craving for riches the witless man ruins himself as well as others.

Dhammapada, verse 355

The gift of Dhamma excels all gifts; the taste of the Dhamma excels all tastes; the delight in Dhamma excels all delights. The Craving-Freed vanquishes all suffering.

Dhammapada, verse 354

From the Nikāyas

In the Dīghajāṇu Sutta (AN 8.54), a householder asks the Buddha how lay people can find well-being in this life. The Buddha names four supports: initiative and skill in one's work (*uṭṭhāna-sampadā*); protection of wealth that has been honestly earned (*āraṅkha-sampadā*); admirable friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*); and balanced living, so that "income exceeds outflow" (*samajīvitā*). This is an early economic model of a good working life: pay is necessary, but meaning also requires skill, friendship and balance.

Four Supports of Welfare in This Life

Dīghajāṇu Sutta (AN 8.54) read as a modern work model



Figure 1.5. The four supports of welfare in this life (AN 8.54). Each corresponds to sources of meaning in modern research: achievement, security, community and autonomy.

In the Debtlessness Sutta (AN 4.62), the Buddha describes four kinds of happiness for a householder: owning wealth earned legitimately, using it well, being free of debt, and living blamelessly in body, speech and mind. He concludes that the first three are "not worth a sixteenth part of the happiness of blamelessness." The meaning of work, in this view, depends finally on the ethical quality of how it is done.

The Professor's Comment: Reacting to the Pay Cheque

Pay touches a sensitive place in the mind. When we compare our wage with others', the automatic reaction is often envy, resentment or a sense of injustice. In religious terms, the reaction may become: "I am poor because of bad kamma" or "Others

prosper because they are blessed and I am not." These reactions narrow attention to a single source of meaning and close off the other seven.

The mindful response does not deny that unfair pay exists. It separates the economic question (is this wage fair, and can I negotiate?) from the existential question (is money the only thing this work gives me?). It also uses faith as a resource: the practice of contentment (*santutṭhi*) is not resignation, but freedom from the compulsion to compare.

Situation	Automatic reaction	Mindful response	Supporting teaching
A colleague earns more	Envy; "life is unfair"	"Is the gap unfair? If so, raise it. If not, what else does my work give me?"	Dhp 204: contentment the greatest wealth
A dull task	"This is worthless."	"Which of the eight sources is present here, even slightly?"	AN 8.54: skill in work
No one notices my effort	"I am invisible."	"Who does benefit? Can I ask for precise feedback?"	AN 4.62: happiness of blamelessness

Chapter Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Pay supports a life; meaning explains the particular place work holds within it.
- Income predicts well-being only in part (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010; Killingsworth et al., 2023).
- Hansen and Keltner identify eight sources of meaning: purpose, learning, achievement, status, power, community, action and autonomy.
- Seeing the beneficiaries of your work increases effort and meaning (Grant et al., 2007).
- Learning gives direction only when you identify, practise and apply it.
- Recognition works best when precise; belonging is a basic human need.
- Autonomy needs clear limits and resources and can be negotiated through specific requests.
- AN 8.54 names four supports of welfare: initiative, protection, good friends and balanced living.
- The Professor's Comment: separate the economic question from the existential one, and use contentment as freedom, not resignation.

Review Questions and Answers

1. What is the main difference between pay and meaning, according to this chapter?

Pay supports a life; meaning explains the particular place work comes to hold within that life.

2. Name four of the eight sources of meaning identified by Hansen and Keltner.

Any four of: purpose, learning, achievement, status, power, community, action, autonomy.

3. What did Kahneman and Deaton find about income and emotional well-being?

Life evaluation kept rising with income, but daily emotional well-being stopped improving beyond roughly \$75,000 a year in their data.

4. In Grant's fundraising study, what happened after callers met a scholarship recipient?

They spent 142 percent more time on the phone and raised 171 percent more money a month later.

5. What is the difference between elevated and everyday purpose?

Elevated purpose is a broad, visible transformation; everyday purpose is a specific, concrete form of help.

6. What three conditions make learning a true source of direction?

You must identify the skill, practise it, and apply it in a real situation.

7. Why is precise recognition better than "good job"?

Because naming the specific decision, effort or conduct connects the action to its effect and makes the contribution visible.

8. What are the three basic needs in self-determination theory?

Autonomy, competence and relatedness.

9. What are the four supports of welfare in the Dīghajāṇu Sutta (AN 8.54)?

Initiative and skill in work, protection of honestly earned wealth, admirable friendship, and balanced living.

10. According to AN 4.62, which happiness is greatest?

The happiness of blamelessness; the others are "not worth a sixteenth part" of it.

Questions for Reflection

1. Which of the eight sources of meaning carries the most weight for you at this stage of life, and why?

2. Like Hùṅg the bus driver, who are the "regular passengers" of your work: the people whose lives your effort quietly supports?

3. If your pay doubled tomorrow but every source of meaning disappeared, would you stay? What does your answer reveal?

4. Which of the four supports in AN 8.54 is strongest in your life, and which is weakest?

5. When you compare yourself with others, what reaction arises first? How might the practice of contentment change it?

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CHAPTER 2

Restoring Your Professional Energy



"When energy is too forceful it leads to restlessness. When energy is too slack it leads to laziness."

Soṇa Sutta, AN 6.55

A Story from Daily Life: The Teacher Who Stopped Singing

For fifteen years, Ms. Hăng began every fourth-grade morning with a song. Her classroom was the loud one at the end of the hall. Then, in one autumn, she stopped. She told her friends at the temple that she had "lost her love for teaching" and was thinking of quitting before the year ended.

Her friend, a retired nurse, asked her to keep a simple log for two weeks: what time she went to bed, what she did after school, and when in the day she felt worst. The log surprised her. She was not bored with the children. She was sleeping five hours a night because she had taken on grading for a colleague on leave, and she had not had a free weekend since August. The lost "passion" was exhaustion wearing the mask of boredom.

Hăng returned the extra grading to the school office and blocked Sunday afternoons for herself. She did not feel transformed. But in November, without planning to, she found herself humming in front of the class again.



Figure 2.1. Ms. Hăng's "lost passion" turns out to be exhaustion: extra grading, five hours of sleep, no free weekend.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Distinguish loss of passion from exhaustion, repetition and structural mismatch.
- Use job crafting to redesign tasks, relationships and perceptions within a role.
- Decide among renewing, pivoting and stepping away using small tests.

Passion Changes

Loss of interest alone does not prove you chose wrongly. It may indicate fatigue, excessive repetition, a different life stage, or a mismatch between what you expect and what the role allows. Andy Molinsky (2017) notes that professional passions change over time and can be reactivated through concrete adjustments. The task is to determine precisely what has changed before making an irreversible decision.

Amy Wrzesniewski and colleagues (1997) distinguished three ways of relating to work: as a **job** (a means to income), a **career** (a path of advancement) or a **calling** (an expression of identity and values). Even among administrative assistants doing similar work, all three orientations appeared in roughly equal measure. These are not fixed identities; the same person can move among them as circumstances change.

Three Orientations to Work



After Wrzesniewski et al. (1997)

Figure 2.2. Three orientations to work. The same person may live in different circles at different seasons of life.

Before making a change, describe exactly what you miss. If you need rest, you need time to recover. If you seek learning, you need a different task. If you seek influence, you may need a conversation about your responsibilities.

CASE NOTE: ÓSCAR, SITE MANAGER

Óscar said for months that he had lost his passion for his trade. When he reviewed his weeks, he found it was not boredom but exhaustion from unpredictable shifts. He negotiated two afternoons free of travel and stopped absorbing urgent tasks that belonged to another role. His interest did not return all at once, but he could finally distinguish fatigue from a deeper lack of fit.

EVIDENCE BOX: BURNOUT IS NOT BOREDOM

Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter (2016) define burnout by three dimensions: overwhelming **exhaustion**, feelings of **cynicism** and detachment from the job, and a sense of **ineffectiveness**. They identify six areas of working life where mismatches drive burnout: workload, control, reward, community, fairness and values. A person who "has lost passion" may be suffering from a mismatch in only one of these areas. Fix the right one.

Redesigning Your Role from Within

A role is not only the tasks in the contract. It also includes the relationships you maintain, the attention you give and the way you interpret what you do. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) called this redesign **job crafting**. It can change tasks (what you do), relationships (whom you work with) or cognitions (how you understand the work).

Type of crafting	Example	Typical gain
Task crafting	Add a brief quality check at the start of each file	Fewer errors, more competence
Relational crafting	Talk with the installers who use your documents	Contact with the effect of your work
Cognitive crafting	See data entry as "protecting reliable information"	A higher level of meaning

To redesign your role, observe where energy appears and where it is lost. Write down the tasks you do well, the conversations that clarify your work, and the moments when a decision you make improves something around you. Then choose one small, negotiable change. A concrete proposal is more likely to succeed than a general request to turn your work into a different job. The adjustment must respect the team's objectives.

CASE NOTE: JÚLIA, DOCUMENTATION LEAD

At an energy company, Júlia suggested reviewing documents with the field installers who used them. She found that field data were often missing and added a short check at the start of each file. It cost a few minutes per file but prevented returns and follow-up calls. Her role stayed administrative, but now included a direct relationship with the work those documents made possible.

Find the Task That Is Missing

A position is rarely fixed. Even when the job description seems closed, some tasks are distributed by habit, some projects need extra support, and some skills have not been connected to any need. Look at your week from a distance. Note which

activities keep you focused, which you handle with ease, and which drain you without offering any learning.

A WORKABLE REQUEST IN THREE STEPS

- Describe the activity you want to add and the need it will meet.
- Propose a limited trial with a timeframe, responsibilities and an observable outcome.
- Agree on a date to review what has changed and what needs adjusting.

Not every task that interests you can be incorporated. Even so, the attempt provides information: there may be an opportunity nearby, you may need to build a skill first, or the role may lack the scope you need.

Hobbies Can Also Restore Your Energy

Your relationship with work does not change only inside the workplace. An activity outside your job can bring back concentration, curiosity or confidence when the professional day has become too narrow. Abdel, an administrator at a transport company, had stopped photographing buildings because his evenings were filled with errands and screens. He reserved one hour on Wednesdays for his camera. Within weeks he brought a sharper eye to work and proposed a simple photo system for recording vehicle breakdowns.

Protecting a hobby does not mean turning it into a second career. If you subject it to goals and profitability, it may lose the freedom that made it restorative. The protected hour needs a real boundary: on the calendar, and with no work email.

EVIDENCE BOX: HOW PEOPLE RECOVER

Sabine Sonnentag and Charlotte Fritz (2007) identified four recovery experiences that restore energy after work: **psychological detachment** (not thinking about work), **relaxation**, **mastery** (learning something challenging outside work) and **control** (choosing how to spend free time). A hobby protected for one hour a week can supply all four.

When Adapting No Longer Helps

Sometimes you adjust tasks, return to a hobby and speak with your manager, yet the mismatch remains. Sustained exhaustion calls for a different reading from boredom: if you struggle to rest, make mistakes from inattention or feel constant tension, care for your health and seek support before deciding on a change. In other cases the problem lies in the structure: a setting without autonomy, a culture that contradicts your values, or work that no longer offers learning.

Molinsky proposes treating a major transition as a practical inquiry: gather information about the destination, try part of the activity, and work out what resources you will need. A well-prepared decision does not remove uncertainty, but it prevents you from mistaking a hard week for a verdict on your whole path.

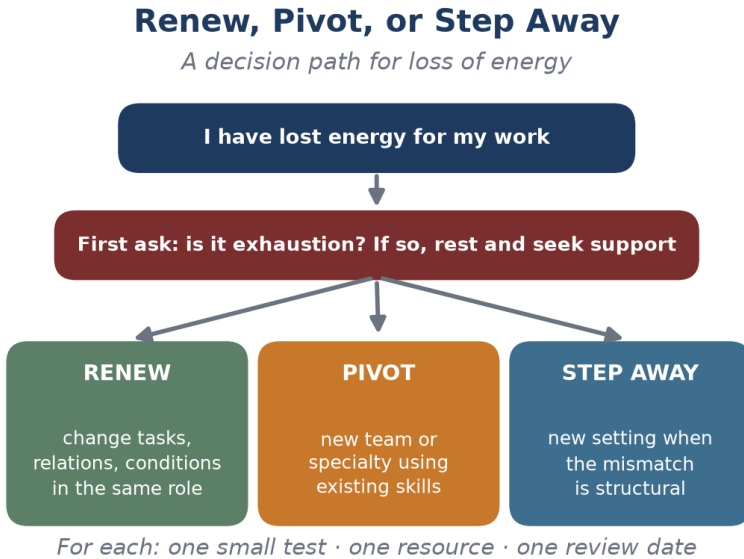


Figure 2.3. A decision path for loss of energy. Exhaustion is addressed first; then renew, pivot or step away, each tested in small steps.

CASE NOTE: MAURO, QUALITY SUPERVISOR

For months, Mauro's quality reports at a pharmaceutical plant ended up in a drawer. Every important decision was made outside his team. He spoke with two managers in other departments, reviewed internal vacancies and spent several days shadowing a production engineer. He found he could transfer his expertise to a role with more capacity to intervene, and requested the move with a transition plan.

The Dhamma Perspective

Voices from the Dhammapada

The idler who does not exert himself when he should, who though young and strong is full of sloth, with a mind full of vain thoughts — such an indolent man does not find the path to wisdom.

Dhammapada, verse 280

Better it is to live one day strenuous and resolute than to live a hundred years sluggish and dissipated.

Dhammapada, verse 112

These verses warn against slackness. But the Buddha's teaching on energy is not "work harder." It is "work wisely." The next verse is the Dhammapada's own image of job crafting:

Irrigators regulate the rivers; fletchers straighten the arrow shaft; carpenters shape the wood; the wise control themselves.

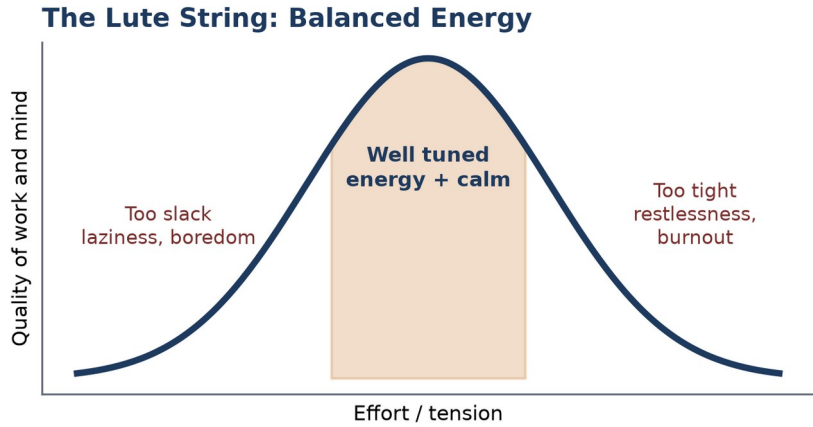
Dhammapada, verse 80



Figure 2.4. Like Soṇa's lute, effort sounds best when the string is neither too tight nor too loose.

From the Nikāyas

The Soṇa Sutta (AN 6.55) tells of a monk who practised walking meditation so strenuously that, according to the tradition, his feet bled; yet he made no progress, and considered giving up. The Buddha, knowing Soṇa had been a skilled musician, asked: when the strings of your lute were too tight, did it sound well? No. When too loose? No. When tuned neither too tight nor too loose? Then it sounded well. "When energy is too forceful it leads to restlessness. When energy is too slack it leads to laziness." Soṇa balanced his effort and soon reached the goal.



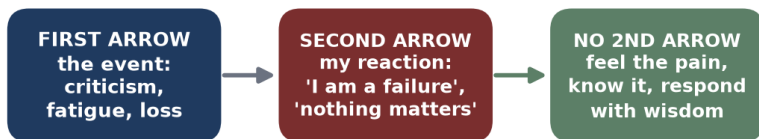
Soṇa Sutta (AN 6.55); compare the Yerkes-Dodson curve in psychology

Figure 2.5. The lute string. Too little effort produces boredom; too much produces restlessness and burnout. The best work comes from balanced energy, a principle psychology later described as the Yerkes–Dodson curve.

The Sallatha Sutta (SN 36.6) offers the image of two arrows. When struck by painful feeling, the untrained person "experiences two feelings, physical and mental," as if shot by one arrow and then a second. The trained disciple feels only the first.

The Two Arrows

Sallatha Sutta (SN 36.6)



Pain may be unavoidable; the added suffering is optional.

Untrained: two feelings, bodily and mental. Trained: one, bodily only.

Figure 2.6. The two arrows (SN 36.6). Tiredness or criticism is the first arrow; the story "I am a failure" is the second.

The Professor's Comment: Reacting to Lost Passion

The loss of passion is fertile ground for the second arrow. The first arrow is real: fatigue, repetition, a difficult boss. The second is the reaction: "I have chosen the wrong life." For religious people a third layer can appear: "I am spiritually lazy," or "I have failed my teacher and my practice." Research on religious coping shows that this kind of spiritual self-accusation, a form of negative religious coping, is associated with higher anxiety and depression (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005).

The mindful response follows Soṇa's example. It asks first whether the string is too tight or too loose. A tired person does not need more effort; a bored person may. Faith here becomes a resource: the Buddha did not shame Soṇa; he asked him a question drawn from his own skill. We can treat ourselves in the same way.

Situation	Automatic reaction	Mindful response	Supporting teaching
Persistent tiredness	"I've lost my passion; I must quit."	"Is this exhaustion? First rest, then decide."	AN 6.55: tune the string
Repetitive tasks	"My practice is failing; I'm lazy."	"What small task or relationship can I craft?"	Dhp 80: the wise shape themselves
A colleague's criticism	Second arrow: "I'm worthless."	"This is painful feeling. What part is useful?"	SN 36.6: no second arrow

PRACTICE: THE TWO-WEEK ENERGY LOG

For fourteen days, record each evening: hours slept; the task that gave most energy; the task that drained most; one moment of calm. At the end, look for patterns. Is the string too tight, too loose, or out of tune in one area only?

Chapter Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- A loss of passion calls for a precise review, not a verdict on your whole path.
- Work can be experienced as a job, a career or a calling; people move among these over time (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997).
- Burnout has three dimensions (exhaustion, cynicism, ineffectiveness) and six drivers (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).
- Job crafting can change tasks, relationships or perceptions (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).
- A workable request names the need, proposes a limited trial and sets a review date.
- Hobbies restore energy through detachment, relaxation, mastery and control (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007).
- When adaptation fails, choose among renew, pivot and step away, testing each in small steps.
- AN 6.55: balance effort like a lute string. SN 36.6: avoid the second arrow.
- The Professor's Comment: replace spiritual self-accusation with Soṇa's question: is the string too tight or too loose?

Review Questions and Answers

1. What four things can a loss of interest indicate, besides a wrong choice?

Fatigue, excessive repetition, a different life stage, or a mismatch between expectations and what the role allows.

2. What are Wrzesniewski's three orientations to work?

Job (income), career (advancement) and calling (identity and values).

3. What are the three dimensions of burnout according to Maslach and Leiter?

Exhaustion, cynicism, and a sense of ineffectiveness.

4. Name the three types of job crafting.

Task crafting, relational crafting and cognitive crafting.

5. What are the three steps of a workable request?

Describe the activity and need; propose a limited trial with an observable outcome; agree a review date.

6. What are Sonnentag and Fritz's four recovery experiences?

Psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery and control.

7. What should you address first when loss of energy appears?

Whether it is exhaustion; if so, rest and seek support before making major decisions.

8. What is the difference between renewing, pivoting and stepping away?

Renew changes conditions within the same role; pivot moves to another role or specialty using existing skills; step away seeks a new setting when the mismatch is structural.

9. What simile did the Buddha give Sona, and what does it teach?

The lute string: neither too tight nor too loose. Effort must be balanced to avoid both restlessness and laziness.

10. What is the "second arrow" in SN 36.6?

The mental suffering we add to a painful experience through our reaction to it.

Questions for Reflection

1. **Think of a time you said you had "lost passion." Looking back, was it exhaustion, boredom, or structural mismatch?**

2. **Is your lute string currently too tight, too loose, or well tuned? What evidence do you have?**

3. **Which one small task, relationship or perception in your work could you craft this month?**

4. **What activity outside work gives you mastery or detachment, and how could you protect one hour for it each week?**

5. When you feel discouraged, what "second arrow" do you most often shoot at yourself, and what would you say to a friend in the same place?

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CHAPTER 3

Building a Purpose of Your Own



"You yourselves must strive; the Buddhas only point the way."

Dhammapada, verse 276

A Story from Daily Life: Grandmother's Recipe Cards

When Bà Tư retired at seventy after thirty years of running a small noodle shop, her children told her to rest. For six months she rested. She watched television, visited the temple on full-moon days, and waited, as she put it, "for heaven to tell me what I am still for." She even asked a fortune-teller at the Lunar New Year fair.

The answer came from somewhere smaller. Her granddaughter, a nursing student, called one evening asking how to make the broth her grandmother used to cook when anyone in the family was sick. Bà Tư explained it over the phone, then realised the girl had written nothing down. The next Sunday she sat at the kitchen table with a pack of index cards and began writing recipes, each with a note: who it was for, when she first cooked it, what it meant.

By summer she had eighty cards. Her nephew scanned them; cousins in three states asked for copies. She did not feel that heaven had sent her a sign. She felt that she had found something to protect, and had built a way to protect it, one card at a time.



Figure 3.1. Bà Tư did not receive a sign. She found something to protect and built it one recipe card at a time.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Replace the idea of a single hidden purpose with the idea of a purpose that is built.
- Describe a task at several levels of meaning, and move up or down as needed.
- Recognise that purpose has many sources and changes shape across life stages.

Purpose Is Not Something Hidden

The stone you lift while looking for an answer may hide nothing. Professional purpose rarely arrives as a clear sign that removes every doubt. It appears as a direction you build while working with what lies directly in front of you.

John Coleman (2017) challenges the idea that each person has one mission waiting to be discovered. That expectation turns an

ordinary task, an uneven path or changing interests into evidence of failure. The more useful question is not "What is my great mission?" but "What value can I add here, whom does it serve, and what concrete form do I want to give it?" The answer may be provisional; purpose develops through decisions and commitments and can be adjusted when life changes.



Figure 3.2. Purpose is built brick by brick from small, repeated acts, not discovered all at once.

CASE NOTE: SAMIRA, CUSTOMER SERVICE

Samira worried that she had no defined calling. She thought her work would matter only if she found a larger cause and left behind calls, notices and procedures. During an incident review, she noticed that many callers were frightened their service would be cut off. She chose a standard: explain options without humiliating, resolve what was possible, and record cases that needed a company response. She had not changed jobs. She had chosen how to do the one she had.

Waiting for a sign	Working toward meaning
The right direction will arrive complete and effortless	You observe what value you can create
Ordinary work is evidence you have not found it yet	Ordinary work is the material you build with
Doubt means failure	Doubt means review

A Task Can Serve Several Purposes

The same activity can be described at different levels of breadth. Entering data into a platform may seem mechanical, but it can also be part of a chain that helps others serve, decide or care better. R. R. Vallacher and D. M. Wegner (1987) studied how people identify their own actions. A low-level identification describes the movement ("typing numbers"); a high-level one describes its function ("keeping shipments on time").

One Task, Three Levels of Description

Action identification theory (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987)



Figure 3.3. One task at three levels. Move up the ladder to see meaning; move down when a broad phrase keeps you from acting.

EVIDENCE BOX: ACTION IDENTIFICATION THEORY

Vallacher and Wegner found that people tend to prefer higher-level descriptions of what they are doing, because these carry meaning. But when an action becomes difficult or goes wrong, people naturally drop to lower levels to regain control: "I'm helping clients" becomes "I'm finding the right form." Both levels are useful. Skilled workers move between them deliberately.

Moving up one level must not invent an impact that is not there. If you prepare packages, you make it possible for someone to receive a product; if you maintain a database, you help someone find reliable information. Equally, move down when a description is too broad: "helping clients" must become listening

carefully, explaining an option, or resolving an issue within the agreed time.

CASE NOTE: ELÍAS, ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Elías checked documents before tax returns were filed and experienced the work as endless boxes and signatures. Reviewing complex files with his colleague Malika, he saw that his accuracy protected small businesses from costly errors. He proposed a checklist for the most frequent cases. The task stayed the same; its description rose one level.

You Do Not Have One Purpose

The pressure to find one complete answer arises when every dimension of life is mixed into a single question. Work matters, but it need not account for your relationships, the care you give, your convictions and what you do when nobody pays you. Coleman describes purpose as a set of orientations that coexist. A person may solve complex problems at work, be present for children, sustain a friendship and serve a neighbourhood without one invalidating the others.

A Portfolio of Purposes Across Life Stages

Illustrative example of one person's shifting sources of meaning

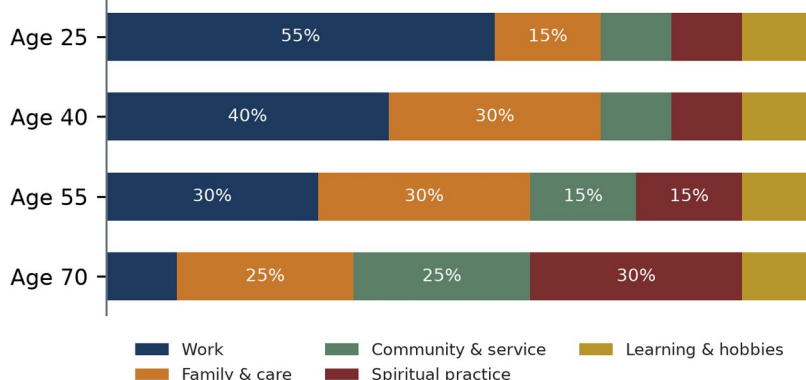


Figure 3.4. An illustrative portfolio of purposes. The share each source holds changes across life; no single source must carry the whole weight.

Distinguish a source of meaning from an obligation kept out of inertia. The first expresses something you value; the second may require a decision, a conversation or a limit. If work takes all the space, you may need to protect a relationship. If all your meaning lies outside work, consider what adjustment at work might be possible.

WORKSHEET: MY CURRENT SOURCES OF MEANING

- At work, I find meaning when...
- Outside work, what matters to me is...
- At this stage of my life, I need more room for...
- One source I want to care for over the next few weeks is...

Purpose Changes Its Shape

What mattered when you began working may no longer hold the same place. The need to learn, gain independence, care for someone or have time alters your relationship with employment. Coleman sees it as natural for purpose to evolve through life stages. Changing priorities do not show a lack of commitment; they show a response to new circumstances.

A salary-centred mindset may be right when you need stability; a career orientation helps you build influence; a vocational orientation may matter more when you seek coherence and service. You can review your current orientation through facts: which tasks you accept, which conversations you avoid, where you put your energy, and how you organise your time.

CASE NOTE: ÁLVARO, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT

Álvaro realised he could no longer sustain the travel he had accepted in his first years. He did not want to leave his sector. He asked his director for more coordination work and fewer long trips. The change let him accompany his father through medical treatment and revealed a talent for organising teams that he had always considered secondary.

REVIEW WITHOUT BETRAYAL

- Which value mattered most when you began?
- Which responsibility or interest has gained importance?
- Which part of your work remains valid?
- What adjustment would let both coexist better?

Giving Meaning to the Specific Task

A broad phrase can guide you, but it cannot decide what you will do tomorrow. "I want to add value" must become behaviour you can observe, repeat and correct. Start by naming the task without interpretation: reviewing contracts, organising shifts, answering queries. The more precise the starting point, the harder it is to hide behind abstract words.

Joana, a training coordinator, said her purpose was "to help people grow." Her calendar showed she spent most of her time sending invitations. She rewrote the task: make sure new employees receive the information they need before their first day. She wrote a short guide, asked managers for common questions and added a follow-up call. New hires arrived better prepared.

Step	Example
Broad phrase	I want to make things easier.
Task	Review the instructions a new person receives.
Criterion	They can complete step one without informal help.
Action	Thursday, 30 minutes: revise the guide and test it with a new hire.

The review ends only when the idea stops being decorative. If it does not change a conversation, a priority, a task or the way you treat someone, it has not yet become a direction.

The Dhamma Perspective

Voices from the Dhammapada

You yourselves must strive; the Buddhas only point the way. Those meditative ones who tread the path are released from the bonds of Mara.

Dhammapada, verse 276

The verse is a precise statement of "built, not found." Even the Buddha does not hand over the destination; he points. The walking is ours.

Make an island for yourself! Strive hard and become wise! Rid of impurities and cleansed of stain, you shall enter the celestial abode of the Noble Ones.

Dhammapada, verse 236

As from a great heap of flowers many garlands can be made, even so should many good deeds be done by one born a mortal.

Dhammapada, verse 53

Verse 53 offers an image of the many-purposed life: one heap of flowers, many garlands. One life, many forms of good.

From the Nikāyas

In the Advice to Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhikā (MN 61), the Buddha teaches his young son to use deeds as a mirror. Before acting, Rāhula should ask: will this harm me, others, or both? While acting, he should check again. After acting, he should review the result: if harmful, disclose it and restrain himself in future; if

skilful, rejoice and continue training. This is the earliest version of the practice this chapter recommends: build purpose by reviewing actual actions, not by waiting for a revelation.

Reflect Before, During, After



Ambalaṭṭhika-Rāhulovāda Sutta (MN 61)

Figure 3.5. The mirror of MN 61. Purpose is refined through reflection before, during and after each action.

In the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN 16), as the Buddha approaches death, he does not appoint a successor. He tells the monks to dwell as islands unto themselves, with the Dhamma as their refuge. Purpose, here too, is not handed down. It is built from within, guided by the teaching.

The Professor's Comment: Waiting for a Sign

The search for purpose has a strong religious pull. The automatic reaction, when one feels lost, is to look outward for a

sign: a fortune-teller, an astrological reading, a dream, a teacher who will simply tell us what we are for. When no sign comes, a second reaction follows: "My destiny is fixed and I have missed it," or "My kamma has closed this door."

The mindful response honours faith while placing responsibility where the Buddha placed it. Kamma is intention (AN 6.63); purpose is therefore made of present intentions repeated over time. Bà Tư did not need a sign; she needed a pack of index cards. Faith, used well, gives the confidence to start the first card.

Situation	Automatic reaction	Mindful response	Supporting teaching
No clear calling	"I must wait for a sign."	"What value can I add today, and to whom?"	Dhp 276: the Buddhas only point
Life stage changes	"My purpose is gone."	"My purpose is changing shape. Which part remains alive?"	Dhp 53: many garlands
Broad ideals, no action	"I am a good person at heart."	"Which action this week shows it?"	MN 61: the mirror of deeds

Chapter Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Purpose is built through decisions and commitments, not discovered as a hidden object (Coleman, 2017).
- Ask: what value can I add here, whom does it serve, and in what concrete form?
- The same task can be described at several levels (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987); move up for meaning, down for action.
- People hold several purposes at once; work need not carry them all.
- Purpose changes shape across life stages; this reflects response, not lack of commitment.
- A purpose must become an observable behaviour, or it remains decoration.
- Dhp 276: the Buddhas only point the way. Dhp 53: one heap of flowers, many garlands.
- MN 61: review actions before, during and after.
- The Professor's Comment: replace waiting for a sign with present intention repeated over time.

Review Questions and Answers

1. Why does Coleman reject the idea of one hidden mission?

Because it turns ordinary tasks, uneven paths and changing interests into evidence of failure, when purpose is actually built through decisions and commitments.

2. What three-part question replaces "What is my great mission?"

What value can I add here, whom does it serve, and what concrete form do I want to give it?

3. What is action identification theory?

Vallacher and Wegner's theory that people describe the same action at different levels, from the concrete movement to its broader purpose.

4. When do people tend to drop to lower-level descriptions of an action?

When the action becomes difficult or goes wrong, so that they can regain control.

5. Name the three levels in the "doing, serving, contributing" ladder.

Doing (the concrete task), serving (enabling a colleague to act) and contributing (helping the final recipient).

6. How should you distinguish a source of meaning from an obligation kept out of inertia?

A source of meaning expresses something you value; an inertial obligation may require a decision, a conversation or a limit.

7. What does a change in priorities across life stages indicate?

A response to new circumstances, not a lack of commitment.

8. What four elements turn a broad phrase into concrete action?

Broad phrase, specific task, observable criterion, scheduled action.

9. What does the Buddha teach Rāhula in MN 61?

To reflect on actions before, during and after doing them, asking whether they cause harm, and to correct or rejoice accordingly.

10. What does Dhammapada verse 276 say about the role of the Buddhas?

"You yourselves must strive; the Buddhas only point the way."

Questions for Reflection

- 1. Have you ever waited for a sign about your purpose? What happened, and what did you learn?**

- 2. Choose one repetitive task you do. Describe it at the levels of doing, serving and contributing.**

- 3. Draw your own portfolio of purposes. Which source has grown in the last five years, and which has shrunk?**

- 4. What value from your early working life still matters? What new responsibility has joined it?**

- 5. Like Bà Tư's recipe cards, what is one small, concrete form your purpose could take this month?**

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CHAPTER 4

Finding Meaning Without a Calling



"Looking after yourself, you look after others; and looking after others, you look after yourself."

Sedaka Sutta, SN 47.19

A Story from Daily Life: The Night Custodian

Rosa works the night shift as a custodian at a children's hospital. When people ask what she does, she says, a little embarrassed, "I clean." She never dreamed of this work. She took it because the hours let her be home when her two sons leave for school and return in the afternoon.

One night a father sat alone in a waiting room on the oncology floor at three in the morning. Rosa was mopping nearby. She stopped, brought him a cup of water and asked if he wanted the lights dimmed. He began to talk about his daughter. Rosa listened for twenty minutes, then finished the floor.

Over the next months she began to notice things: which rooms had parents who had not slept, which corners frightened small children at night, which nurse needed the supply closet restocked before the 5 a.m. rounds. She still says "I clean." But she has added a second sentence: "I make the floor safe and quiet for the families." She does not call it a calling. She calls it her job, and it pays for her sons' lives. Both statements are true.



Figure 4.1. Rosa says, "I clean." Then she adds, "I make the floor safe and quiet for the families."

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand why a job need not be a calling to be meaningful.
- Use the recipient chain to see whom your work affects.
- Distinguish healthy service from self-sacrifice that leads to burnout.

Not Every Job Has to Be a Calling

The word "calling" often takes up too much space. It seems to demand that every task fit your identity and every workday confirm who you are. When that does not happen, the gap may feel like a personal failure. Wrzesniewski's three orientations (job, career, calling) remind us that a job orientation is legitimate. A job that supports concrete needs is not a lesser life.

CASE NOTE: LEIRE, PURCHASING TECHNICIAN

Leire took a purchasing job to support her family while training in ceramics, and felt ashamed she had no passion for purchasing. She stopped measuring her day by enthusiasm and began to observe what it made possible: reduced hours at a second job, ceramics classes, free weekends. She also volunteered to improve the ordering system. She never called the job a calling, but she worked with less resistance and could explain the place it held in her life.

Term	Meaning
Job	An activity that supports concrete needs
Career	A path of progress, recognition or responsibility
Calling	An intense relationship with the content and meaning of the work
Purpose	The direction you give to what you do and what it helps sustain

Purpose does not have to fit entirely within your job title. It may lie in the help you provide, what you sustain outside working hours, or the care you bring to a task.

EVIDENCE BOX: THE HOSPITAL CLEANERS

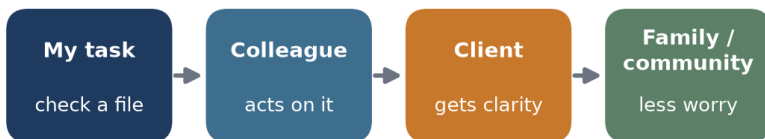
In research cited by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), hospital cleaning staff described the same job in strikingly different ways. Some saw it as unskilled work with little contact with others. Others saw themselves as part of the healing team: they timed their work around patients' needs, chatted with visitors, and paid attention to which patients seemed lonely. The second group had crafted their jobs, through relationships and perception, into something more meaningful, without changing their job title.

Look at the Recipient

The meaning of a task often changes when you see whom it affects. From the inside, an activity may seem like a sequence of entries, calls or checks. From the outside, those same actions form part of someone's concrete experience.

Follow the Chain to the Recipient

Every task touches someone downstream



Ask: who receives this? What changes for them? What fails without it?

Figure 4.2. The recipient chain. Even a task far from the customer reaches someone downstream.

EVIDENCE BOX: TASK SIGNIFICANCE

Adam Grant (2008) tested whether reminding workers of their impact changed behaviour. Lifeguards who read stories about rescues performed by other lifeguards later volunteered for more hours and were rated by supervisors as more helpful than lifeguards who read about the personal benefits of the job. Knowing that work matters to others raised both effort and care.

Distinguish usefulness from approval. Thanks are pleasant, but purpose does not depend on praise. It is enough to understand precisely what need you are addressing and what standard you want to uphold.

CASE NOTE: SAFIYA, INSURANCE OPERATIONS

Safiya's team reviewed files and rarely heard anything after closing a case. Her manager arranged a monthly session with the customer service team, which explained where clients got stuck. Safiya suggested merging two checks and rewriting an unclear instruction. Some clients received replies sooner, and she began to read each file as part of a broader conversation.

FOCUS ON WHO RECEIVES YOUR WORK

- Identify the person who uses the final result of your work.
- Ask for an example of what helps or hinders them.
- Change one specific part of the task and check the effect.
- Do not assume you know their needs: listen before interpreting.

Raising the Level of Description

"I entered the data into the system," said Óscar, an administrative assistant. The sentence was accurate but did not explain why it mattered. One level up, he kept available the information needed to plan routes; another level up, he helped shipments arrive on time. When a task feels opaque, complete the sentence: **"I am doing this so that..."** The ending should name a person, an outcome or a condition you want to preserve. If nothing comes to mind, you have found something worth reviewing. (Chapter 3 develops this method in detail.)

Work Sustains Something Important

The company's mission is not always enough to give your workday meaning. You may not identify with the product, the industry or the corporate message and still recognise that your work sustains something important in your life. Emily Esfahani Smith (2017) notes that work gains meaning when understood as a way of helping others, and that help may extend to those who depend on your income, your availability or your stability.

CASE NOTE: TOMÁS, BILLING ANALYST

Tomás had begun doing the bare minimum on usage reports he barely cared about. A conversation with his roommate reminded him that this schedule allowed him to care for his father, who was recovering from surgery. He did not make the bills a passion, but he worked more systematically and agreed with his manager on two meeting-free afternoons in exchange for submitting closeouts a day early.

WHAT YOUR WORK SUSTAINS

- A concrete financial need.
- A caregiving responsibility.
- A home or a close relationship.
- A project that takes place outside your job.

Naming it helps you choose which adjustments protect that part of your life.

This perspective does not require you to accept work that harms your health or contradicts your basic values. It helps you describe honestly what you sustain and decide whether the cost remains reasonable.

Serving Need Not Mean Self-Sacrifice

Helping can guide professional activity, but it does not turn every request into an obligation. When service is confused with permanent availability, purpose stops organising work and begins to consume everything. Contribution needs structure: sufficient time, clear priorities, and the ability to say no when a demand prevents attention to what is essential.

EVIDENCE BOX: GIVERS WHO LAST

In *Give and Take* (2013), Adam Grant reports that people who help others are over-represented both at the top and at the bottom of performance rankings. The difference lies in how they give. "Selfless" givers who ignore their own needs tend to burn out. "Otherish" givers, who care about others while also protecting their own interests and energy, sustain their contribution over time.

CASE NOTE: MARTA AND YOUSSEF, TECHNICAL SUPPORT

After an incident meeting, Youssef felt proud that the team could solve anything; Marta, the on-call manager, felt that someone was always expected to answer after hours. Marta recorded incidents and hours of availability for a month, then proposed rotating shifts, an urgent-only channel and response deadlines for everything else. Youssef agreed to cover one more afternoon, because now he knew exactly when his responsibility ended.

Before accepting a new responsibility, specify: what result is expected, how much time it will require, and which priority it will displace. If you cannot answer all three, the request is not yet properly defined.

The Acrobat's Balance

Sedaka Sutta (SN 47.19)

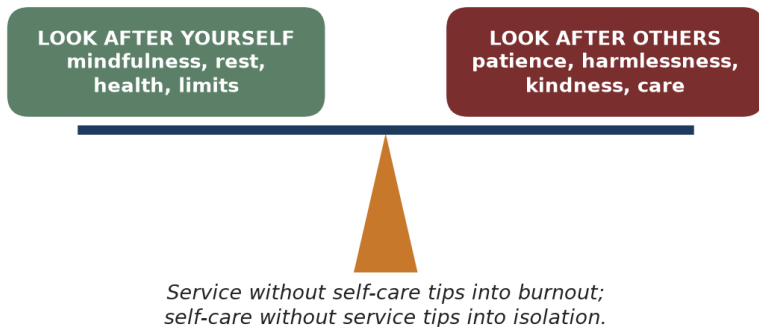


Figure 4.3. The acrobat's balance (SN 47.19). Caring for oneself and caring for others are two sides of the same pole.

The Dhamma Perspective

Voices from the Dhammapada

Let one not neglect one's own welfare for the sake of another, however great. Clearly understanding one's own welfare, let one be intent upon the good.

Dhammapada, verse 166

This verse is sometimes misread as selfishness. In context, "one's own welfare" (*attadattha*) refers to one's own spiritual good: a person who destroys their own health and peace of mind cannot serve anyone well for long.

One should first establish oneself in what is proper; then only should one instruct others. Thus the wise man will not be reproached.

Dhammapada, verse 158

From the Nikāyas

In the Sedaka Sutta (SN 47.19), the Buddha tells of an acrobat who proposes to his apprentice that each should watch over the other on the bamboo pole. The apprentice disagrees: each should look after themselves, and in that way both will perform safely and come down unharmed. The Buddha endorses the apprentice. Looking after oneself means developing mindfulness; looking after others means patience, harmlessness, love and sympathy. "Looking after yourself, you look after others; and looking after others, you look after yourself."



Figure 4.4. The acrobats of SN 47.19: each guards their own balance, and so both perform safely.

In the Advice to Sigālaka (DN 31), the Buddha describes duties between employers and workers twenty-five centuries before labour law. Employers should assign work according to ability, provide food and wages, care for workers when sick, share special treats and give time off. Workers in turn should be diligent, honest, do their work well and uphold their employer's good name. Meaning at work, in this teaching, rests on reciprocity: neither side is asked to sacrifice itself.

The Professor's Comment: Service, Shame and Self-Sacrifice

Two religious reactions are common in this territory. The first is shame about humble work: "My job is low because my merit is low." This turns an honest livelihood into a source of spiritual inferiority. The second is the belief that a good practitioner must never refuse a request: "A true Buddhist gives everything." This

can lead to exhaustion and quiet resentment, which then produce guilt, which produces more over-giving.

The mindful response reads the teachings more carefully. Right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*) concerns whether work is honest and harmless, not whether it is prestigious; Rosa's cleaning is fully right livelihood. And the Sedaka Sutta places self-protection first, not last. Generosity (*dāna*) is a perfection only when given with a clear and joyful mind, before, during and after giving.

Situation	Automatic reaction	Mindful response	Supporting teaching
A humble job	"My merit is low; I'm ashamed."	"This is honest, harmless work that sustains my family."	Right livelihood; DN 31
Constant requests	"A good Buddhist never says no."	"Which priority will this displace? Can I give it with a clear mind?"	Dhp 166; SN 47.19
Feeling invisible	"Nobody values what I do."	"Who is downstream of my work? What changes for them?"	Grant (2008); the recipient chain

Chapter Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- A job need not be a calling to be meaningful; supporting concrete needs is legitimate.
- Purpose does not have to fit within your job title.
- Seeing the recipient of your work raises effort and care (Grant, 2008).
- "I am doing this so that..." reveals the function of a task.
- Work may sustain something important outside it: family, care, a project.
- Service needs structure; "otherish" givers last, selfless givers burn out (Grant, 2013).
- Before accepting a new responsibility: what result, how much time, which priority displaced?
- Dhp 166 and SN 47.19: protecting oneself and protecting others go together.
- DN 31: meaning at work rests on reciprocal duties between employer and worker.
- The Professor's Comment: honest work is right livelihood; generosity requires a clear mind, not self-destruction.

Review Questions and Answers

1. Why can a job orientation be legitimate?

Because work that supports concrete needs, such as a family or a project outside work, has real value even if it does not express one's identity.

2. How does this chapter define purpose, as distinct from job, career and calling?

The direction you give to what you do and what it helps sustain.

3. What did the hospital cleaners research show?

That some cleaners crafted the same job into part of the healing team through relationships and perception, making it more meaningful without changing the title.

4. What did Grant's lifeguard study find?

Lifeguards who read about rescues by others volunteered more hours and were rated as more helpful.

5. What is the difference between usefulness and approval?

Approval is praise from others; usefulness is understanding precisely what need you meet and what standard you uphold, regardless of praise.

6. Complete the diagnostic sentence used in this chapter.

"I am doing this so that...", followed by a person, an outcome or a condition to preserve.

7. What three questions should you ask before accepting a new responsibility?

What result is expected, how much time will it require, and which priority will it displace?

8. What is the difference between "selfless" and "otherish" givers?

Selfless givers ignore their own needs and tend to burn out; otherish givers care for others while protecting their own energy and interests.

9. What lesson does the acrobat simile in SN 47.19 teach?

That by looking after yourself (mindfulness) you look after others, and by looking after others (patience, kindness) you look after yourself.

10. Name two duties of an employer in DN 31.

Any two of: assign work according to ability, give food and wages, care for workers when sick, share special treats, give time off.

Questions for Reflection

- 1. If your work is not a calling, what does it sustain in your life? Name it as concretely as you can.**

- 2. Like Rosa, what second sentence could you add after "I do..."?**

- 3. Who is the furthest recipient of your work you can identify, and what would go wrong for them without it?**

- 4. When did you last say yes to a request that you should have refused? What happened afterwards?**

- 5. Does your faith currently help you give with a clear mind, or does it push you to give beyond your limits?**

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CHAPTER 5

Reviewing Your Fit with Your Work



"Like a beautiful flower full of color but without fragrance, even so, fruitless are the fair words of one who does not practice them."

Dhammapada, verse 51

A Story from Daily Life: The Shop Calendar

Mr. Okafor runs a small phone-repair shop in a strip mall. If you ask him what matters most, he answers at once: "My family. Everything I do is for them." He means it.

In January his daughter asked him to come to her piano recital. He said yes, then a customer brought in six broken tablets from a school district, and he missed it. In March he missed a parent-teacher conference. In April his wife, without arguing, handed him the shop's paper calendar and a red pen and asked him to circle every hour he had spent with the family in the last month. There were nine circles.

Mr. Okafor did not stop loving his family, and he did not close the shop. He hired a teenager for Saturday afternoons and wrote "Family — closed" across every Sunday in permanent marker. In June he sat in the second row at the next recital. He described the experience later in four words: "I measured, then changed."



Figure 5.1. Nine red circles in a month: the distance between what Mr. Okafor said and what he did.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Review the fit among person, role and organisation at regular intervals.
- Recognise which mindset (job, career, purpose) guides each block of work.
- Measure the distance between stated values and actual behaviour, and write a usable purpose statement.

Purpose Needs Regular Revision

The fit between a person and their work is not settled when a job offer is accepted. Tasks, teams, company direction and personal needs all change. Dan Pontefract (2016) presents purpose at three related levels: personal, role and organisational. Tension arises when one changes while the others remain defined by an outdated description.

Level	What it includes	Review question
Person	What you value, what you can do, what you need now	What has changed in me?
Role	Tasks, relationships and decisions in your job	What has changed in my work?
Organisation	Culture, priorities, resources	What has changed around me?

CASE NOTE: CELIA, HEAD OF QUALITY

A new manager concentrated decisions in a small group, and Celia lost direct contact with the plant teams. She first tried working longer hours. Then she asked to join process reviews and proposed short meetings with production shifts, tested for six weeks. She regained part of her connection and discovered she needed less influence over final decisions than she had assumed; contributing data and seeing whether measures worked was enough.

At the end of each month, answer three specific questions: Which part of my work brought me closer to what I value? Which part moved me away? What condition would need to change to restore balance? Three specific answers are worth more than a general assessment.

Recognising Which Mindset You Work From

Not every workday feels the same. Some days you aim to get the job done and get paid; on others you focus on moving ahead; on some, the task connects with something you consider worthwhile. Pontefract distinguishes three mindsets: the **job mindset** (time for salary), the **career mindset** (progress, position, influence) and the **purpose mindset** (commitment to the meaning

of the activity). None is wrong; the question is whether the mix fits what you say you want.

CASE NOTE: DIEGO AND REBECA, WAREHOUSE

Diego said openly he had taken a big project for the bonus, and two weeks later was still rejecting every improvement idea. His colleague Rebeca recorded for several days which decisions she was making and why. Some appealed to her because she could learn; others because they made life easier for the next shift. She stopped judging herself for having mixed motives, requested training in planning, and proposed leading a pilot. Salary still mattered, but it was no longer the only reason she was involved.

WEEKLY SELF-OBSERVATION TABLE

- Job mindset: what economic need am I meeting through this work?
- Career mindset: what ability or position am I developing?
- Purpose mindset: what contribution do I want to protect?
- Also note what each has cost you this week.

Measuring the Distance Between What You Say and Do

A purpose statement can sound precise and still fail to appear in your calendar. To check, observe behaviour: which meetings you accept, which problems you prioritise, where your attention goes, which efforts you repeat.

Measuring the Say-Do Gap

Illustrative weekly self-observation; Dhp 51-52

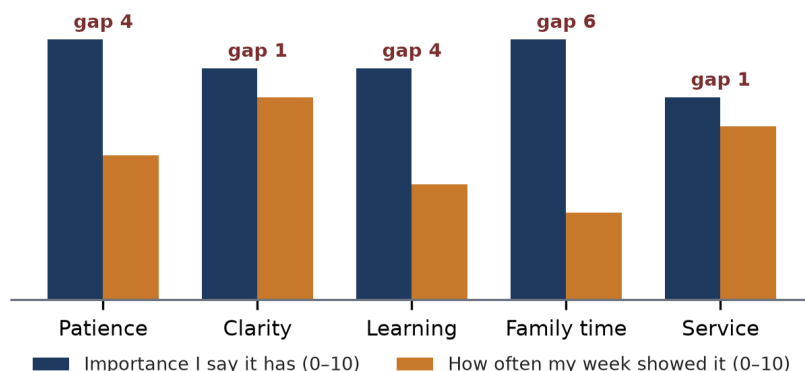


Figure 5.2. An illustrative say-do gap. The largest gaps show where a stated value has not yet become practice.

EVIDENCE BOX: WHERE ATTENTION ACTUALLY GOES

Matthew Killingsworth and Daniel Gilbert (2010) used a smartphone app to sample 2,250 adults at random moments. People's minds were wandering away from what they were doing 46.9 percent of the time, and they were less happy when their minds wandered, even to pleasant topics. Attention is the raw material of a lived purpose. If half of it is elsewhere, the say-do gap is partly an attention gap.

CASE NOTE: MAURO, PROJECT MANAGER

Mauro wrote that he wanted people "to work with clarity." His calendar showed that almost every one-to-one meeting was a request for status updates; he barely explained his criteria. For a week, he noted what he did in each meeting and what effect he expected. He then replaced two status requests with a joint review of priorities and asked which obstacles they could remove together.

When the observation period ends, choose one gap to reduce. It may be enough to alter one meeting, reserve one hour or make one different request. The change must be visible, so you can verify whether your words are taking practical form.

Daily record	Question
Activity	What did I spend my time on?
Decision	Which criterion did I use?
Person affected	Whom did it help, or make things harder for?
Distance	What did I do differently from what I say I value?
Next adjustment	Which behaviour will I repeat or change?

Writing a Personal Statement

A personal purpose statement does not describe your job or list your responsibilities. It explains how you want to contribute, decide and relate to others. Pontefract sees it as a brief expression of how you choose to live your days; Nick Craig and Scott Snook (2014) add that it should be personal, recognisable and able to guide action.

Words reveal differences. "Managing a sales team" describes a role. "Opening opportunities for others to work better" begins to express a way of carrying it out.

CASE NOTE: ARIADNA, HEAD OF PURCHASING

Ariadna's first draft read "ensure the efficiency of the supply chain." Reading it aloud, she realised it could belong to anyone in her department. Returning to her most meaningful experiences, she noticed she enjoyed clarifying confusing problems and getting opposing teams to collaborate. Her new version, "turn complexity into agreements that make progress possible," helped her accept a mediation she would previously have avoided.

FIVE-LINE PURPOSE STATEMENT TEMPLATE

- What I am particularly good at is...
- My work interests include...
- I want my work to help...
- The way I want to do this is...
- My provisional statement: "The purpose of my work is..."

Write several versions, let each rest, and remove words that could appear in a corporate brochure. The final phrase does not have to please everyone; it must help you recognise which decisions feel like yours.

Choosing the Next Adjustment

A statement acquires value only when it changes a decision. Do not try to transform your entire workday at once. Choose one small move that tests the statement and can be reviewed with data, not impressions.

EVIDENCE BOX: IF–THEN PLANS

Peter Gollwitzer (1999) showed that "implementation intentions," plans of the form "When situation X arises, I will do Y," greatly increase the chance that intentions become action. A meta-analysis of 94 studies found a medium-to-large effect on goal attainment (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). Mr. Okafor's "Sunday: Family — closed" is an implementation intention written in permanent marker.

CASE NOTE: LEIRE, QUALITY CONTROL

"I need more creative work" was too broad to raise with her manager. Leire noted which moments of the week gave her energy, found she enjoyed analysing complaints, and asked to review incidents on two production lines for one month. After four weeks she had cut some repetitive tasks and learned she also needed contact with the factory floor. A vague feeling had become usable information.

ONE CHANGE TO MAKE IN THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS

- Choose a single observable action.
- Specify whom you will speak with or what you will do.
- Set aside a specific time in your calendar.
- Note what you hope to check.
- Review the result at the end of the week.

If nothing changes after several reasonable trials, the statement has not failed. It has shown that fit requires a more far-reaching decision.

The Dhamma Perspective

Voices from the Dhammapada

Like a beautiful flower full of color but without fragrance, even so, fruitless are the fair words of one who does not practice them.

Dhammapada, verse 51

Like a beautiful flower full of color and also fragrant, even so, fruitful are the fair words of one who practices them.

Dhammapada, verse 52

A purpose statement is the colour of the flower; practice is its fragrance. The say–do gap is the distance between the two.

Much though he recites the sacred texts, but acts not accordingly, that heedless man is like a cowherd who only counts the cows of others — he does not partake of the blessings of the holy life.

Dhammapada, verse 19

Let none find fault with others; let none see the omissions and commissions of others. But let one see one's own acts, done and undone.

Dhammapada, verse 50



Figure 5.3. The clean mirror of AN 10.51: neither smashing it nor ignoring the smudge, but washing the face.

From the Nikāyas

In the Sacitta Sutta (AN 10.51), the Buddha says that a monk who cannot read the minds of others should at least become "skilled in encompassing my own mind." He compares this to a young person examining their face in a clean mirror: if they see dirt, they work to remove it; if the face is clean, they are glad. The disciple examines whether they are often covetous or content, ill-willed or kind, dull or alert, restless or calm. Where faults are often present, extra effort is needed; where good qualities are present, training continues.

The Mirror of One's Own Mind

Sacitta Sutta (AN 10.51): a weekly inner audit

If often present: abandon		If often present: keep training	
☐ covetous	☐ ill-willed	☐ content	☐ kind
☐ dull, drowsy	☐ restless	☐ alert	☐ calm
☐ doubting	☐ angry	☐ confident	☐ patient
☐ defiled	☐ tense body	☐ clear	☐ at ease
☐ lazy	☐ unfocused	☐ energetic	☐ collected

Figure 5.4. The mirror of one's own mind (AN 10.51). A weekly inner audit complements the external audit of the calendar.

The Professor's Comment: Reacting to Our Own Inconsistency

Discovering a say-do gap produces a strong reaction, and religious people feel it sharply because their stated values are high. Two automatic reactions are common. One is self-justification: "I chant every morning, so I am still a good person," using ritual to cover the gap. The other is harsh self-condemnation: "I am a hypocrite; my practice is worthless," which leads to discouragement and often to abandoning the practice altogether.

The mindful response is the mirror of AN 10.51: neither flattering nor cruel. The young person in the simile does not smash the mirror on seeing a smudge, nor pretend it is not there.

They wash their face. The gap is information. Mr. Okafor did not need to feel guilty; he needed a red pen and a permanent marker.

Situation	Automatic reaction	Mindful response	Supporting teaching
A stated value is missing from my week	"I'm a hypocrite."	"Here is a smudge. What one change would wash it?"	AN 10.51: the clean mirror
Ritual practice, unchanged behaviour	"My chanting makes up for it."	"Does my practice reach my calendar?"	Dhp 19: counting others' cows
Seeing others' inconsistency	Criticising colleagues	"What have I done and left undone?"	Dhp 50: see one's own acts

Chapter Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Fit among person, role and organisation must be reviewed whenever one of them changes (Pontefract, 2016).
- Three mindsets (job, career, purpose) can coexist; check whether their mix fits your stated priorities.
- Measure the say–do gap through behaviour: meetings, priorities, attention, repeated efforts.
- Attention is the raw material of purpose; minds wander almost half the time (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010).
- A personal statement explains how you contribute, not what your job is; write, rest and revise it.
- If–then plans turn intentions into action (Gollwitzer, 1999).
- Choose one observable change for the next seven days and review it.
- Dhp 51–52: fair words without practice are a flower without fragrance.
- AN 10.51: examine your own mind like a face in a clean mirror.
- The Professor's Comment: neither excuse the gap with ritual nor condemn yourself for it; wash the smudge.

Review Questions and Answers

1. What are Pontefract's three levels of purpose?

Personal, role (work) and organisational purpose.

2. When should the fit between person and work be reviewed?

Whenever one of the three levels changes, and routinely, for example at the end of each month.

3. What are the three monthly review questions in this chapter?

Which part of my work brought me closer to my values? Which moved me away? What condition must change to restore balance?

4. Name the three workplace mindsets.

Job mindset, career mindset and purpose mindset.

5. How can you measure the say–do gap?

By observing behaviour: which meetings you accept, which problems you prioritise, where your attention goes, and which efforts you repeat.

6. What did Killingsworth and Gilbert find about mind wandering?

Minds wandered 46.9 percent of the time, and people were less happy when their minds wandered.

7. What is an implementation intention?

A plan in the form "When situation X arises, I will do Y," which increases the chance that intentions become action.

8. What makes a personal purpose statement different from a job description?

It explains how you want to contribute, decide and relate to others, rather than listing your role or responsibilities.

9. In Dhammapada 51–52, what do the colour and the fragrance of the flower represent?

The colour represents fair words; the fragrance represents practising them.

10. What simile does the Buddha use in AN 10.51, and what does it teach?

A person examining their face in a clean mirror; it teaches honest self-examination followed by effort to remove faults and continue good qualities.

Questions for Reflection

1. If someone circled in red the hours you gave last month to what you say matters most, how many circles would there be?

2. Which mindset (job, career or purpose) guided most of your work this week? Was that the right mix for this stage of life?

3. Write a first draft of your personal purpose statement. Which word in it sounds borrowed rather than yours?

4. What "if-then" plan, like Mr. Okafor's Sunday sign, could close one gap this month?

5. When you see your own inconsistency, do you tend to excuse it or condemn it? What would the "clean mirror" response look like?

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CHAPTER 6

Turning Your Purpose into Leadership



"Just as a solid rock is not shaken by the storm, even so the wise are not affected by praise or blame."

Dhammapada, verse 81

A Story from Daily Life: The Volunteer Without a Title

For nine years, Chì Mai has cooked in the kitchen of her neighbourhood temple every Sunday. She holds no office. The temple committee has a president, a treasurer and a secretary; she is none of them.

Yet on festival days, newcomers drift toward her. She has a habit: whenever someone arrives unsure what to do, she hands them a small, clear task, "wash these herbs, then come back," and remembers their name. Teenagers who came only because their parents insisted end up staying until evening. When the old president retired, three committee members separately suggested Mai for the role.

She refused at first. "I am not a leader," she said. "I just make sure nobody stands alone in the kitchen." The abbot smiled and said that was the most accurate description of leadership he had heard that year. Mai accepted on one condition: she would keep her Sunday shift in the kitchen.



Figure 6.1. Chị Mai leads without a title: nobody stands alone in her kitchen.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Distinguish a leadership purpose from a title or a role.
- Find your purpose in recurring scenes from your own story and test it against others' observations.
- Translate a purpose statement into visible behaviour and a plan from five years to thirty days.

Purpose Is Not Your Title

Your title indicates the position you occupy in a structure. Your purpose expresses how you influence others, the kind of difference you seek, and what others would miss if you stopped. Nick Craig and Scott Snook (2014) stress that a leadership purpose is neither a list of competencies nor a business goal, and it does not depend on an office, a large team or formal authority. A person can lead a meeting without running the department, or

exert decisive influence from a technical role by helping others understand a problem.

Element	What it describes	Test
Title	The place you occupy in the organisation	Changes with the organisation chart
Role	The responsibilities you take on	Changes with the job
Purpose	The distinctive contribution you want to make	Would it survive a new business card tomorrow?

CASE NOTE: MOHAMED, FINANCE COORDINATOR

Mohamed began with "I'm in finance, so my purpose is to control the numbers." Reviewing her career, she saw her best moments came when she translated complex data so others could decide without fear. She changed the phrase to "make what enables decisions understandable," began presenting each report with a summary of risks, options and consequences, and teams began consulting her before finalising plans.

If your identity depends only on your position, any reorganisation can leave you without an account of what you contribute. Express purpose with concrete verbs: clarify, connect, sustain, open, organise, protect, challenge. Use them only if they describe how you actually act.

Reading Your Career Story

Purpose often appears in recurring scenes from your life. Craig and Snook suggest looking for common themes across early memories, demanding experiences and sources of energy. The

question is not "What defines me forever?" but "What trait of mine appears in different contexts and guides my best decisions?"

CASE NOTE: MANUEL, MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

Manuel remembered taking bicycles apart as a child to fix them, and, during a serious factory breakdown, calming the team while organising repairs. Alongside a recent interest in restoring furniture, he saw one thread: finding what keeps something from working and restoring its stability. He began describing his leadership as "helping things hold together again."

THREE CLUES FROM YOUR STORY

- An activity that absorbed you before you thought about recognition.
- A difficulty you faced, and what you chose to protect within it.
- A current task that leaves you with more energy than when you started.

Check Your Image Against Others

Introspection has a limit: you can observe only what you know how to name. People who have worked with you may see recurring behaviours that you consider natural and therefore fail to recognise as contributions. Ask two or three people from different contexts: a colleague, someone you have managed, a friend.

Check Your Image Against Others

Johari window (Luft & Ingham, 1955) as a feedback tool



Figure 6.2. The Johari window. Feedback moves information from the blind spot into the open area.

CASE NOTE: TOMÁS, OPERATIONS

Tomás described himself as prudent and methodical. A colleague told him: "I always think of you when a delicate situation needs sorting out." He had not seen that his strength was creating calm without hiding problems. He wrote down recurring words from several conversations, separated shared patterns from isolated opinions, and recast his statement as "giving structure to uncertainty so the team can act."

EVIDENCE BOX: FEEDBACK IS POWERFUL BUT RISKY

Avraham Kluger and Angelo DeNisi (1996) analysed 607 effect sizes from feedback studies. On average, feedback improved performance, but in more than one-third of cases it made performance worse, especially when it drew attention to the person's self-image rather than to the task. Ask for examples of behaviour, not verdicts on character.

Others' opinions are not a verdict. They may reflect one project, one difficult relationship or an old image. Look for examples, not praise. If someone says you are clear, ask for a situation where that clarity helped. If they say you control too much, ask which behaviour gives that impression.

HOW TO ASK FOR HONEST OBSERVATIONS

- "I want to understand what pattern you see in the way I work."
- "When have you seen me add the most value?"
- "What behaviour of mine makes it easier or harder for others to move forward?"
- "Which word in my statement doesn't ring true to you?"

From Personal Statement to Action

A purpose statement must guide conduct others can observe, especially under pressure, disagreement or decisions with no perfect answer. Craig and Snook argue that purpose has impact when it becomes a plan; Bill George's work on authentic leadership locates authenticity in the consistency between values and actions.

Choose three verbs from your statement and turn them into commitments. "Connect" can mean speaking with a team before deciding; "protect," setting aside resources for an essential task; "challenge," asking for evidence before settling on the first answer.

CASE NOTE: SAÚL, PROJECT MANAGER

Saúl wrote, "I want my team to be more autonomous," then noticed he still approved every detail. He gave a colleague full responsibility for a proposal, agreed on two review points, and accepted that the outcome would not follow his method. The team took on more decisions, and Saúl could see what information they actually needed from him.

Link	Example
Purpose	"Clarify what seems confusing."
Behaviour	Summarise the problem before proposing solutions.
Difficult decision	Ask for more time when data are missing.
Effect	The team understands the risks and decides with better judgement.

Difficult moments are the clearest test. If your purpose speaks of listening, notice what you do when someone disagrees. If it speaks of developing others, notice whether you fix the mistake yourself or help the other person learn to fix it.

Designing a Plan with Impact

A statement points to a direction but does not say what to do tomorrow. Craig and Snook suggest starting with a picture of the next three to five years: what kind of leader you want to be, what

contribution you want to expand, and who should benefit. Then reduce the distance step by step.



Figure 6.3. From purpose to the thirty-day step. Each level narrows the statement into actions that can be checked.

EVIDENCE BOX: SPECIFIC GOALS WORK

Edwin Locke and Gary Latham (2002) summarised 35 years of research: specific, challenging goals lead to higher performance than vague goals such as "do your best," provided people are committed, receive feedback and have the ability to reach them. A thirty-day step is a specific goal attached to a broad purpose.

CASE NOTE: CLARA, ENGINEERING PROJECT MANAGER

Clara wrote: "In four years, I want to be a leader who turns scattered teams into effective partnerships." In the first month she spoke with managers in three areas, joined a cross-functional bid and set up a short meeting to clarify dependencies. After three months she saw that her next step was not to lead more people but to learn to negotiate priorities without breaking trust.

Review the plan at reasonable intervals. If a goal no longer makes sense, change the path without abandoning the purpose behind it.

The Dhamma Perspective

Voices from the Dhammapada

A monk is not an elder because his head is gray. He is but ripe in age, and he is called one grown old in vain.

Dhammapada, verse 260

One in whom there is truthfulness, virtue, inoffensiveness, restraint and self-mastery, who is free from defilements and is wise — he is truly called an Elder.

Dhammapada, verse 261

Seniority is not leadership; qualities are. These two verses are the Dhammapada's version of "purpose is not your title."

Should one find a man who points out faults and who reproves, let him follow such a wise and sagacious person as one would a guide to hidden treasure. It is always better, and never worse, to cultivate such an association.

Dhammapada, verse 76

There never was, there never will be, nor is there now, a person who is wholly blamed or wholly praised.

Dhammapada, verse 228

Though one may conquer a thousand times a thousand men in battle, yet he indeed is the noblest victor who conquers himself.

Dhammapada, verse 103

From the Nikāyas

In the Adhammika Sutta (AN 4.70), the Buddha uses the image of cattle crossing a river. If the lead bull goes crooked, all the others go crooked; if the lead bull goes straight, all the others go straight. So too among people: when those regarded as leaders act righteously, the rest follow. Leadership, in this teaching, is first a matter of conduct, and only afterwards of position.



Figure 6.4. AN 4.70: when the lead bull goes straight, the whole herd crosses straight.

The Dhammapada adds a practical rule for anyone who leads or teaches:

One should do what one teaches others to do; if one would train others, one should be well controlled oneself. Difficult, indeed, is self-control.

Dhammapada, verse 159

The Professor's Comment: Reacting to Praise, Blame and Position

Leadership exposes the mind to the eight worldly conditions (*lokadhamma*): gain and loss, fame and disrepute, praise and blame, pleasure and pain. Two religious reactions are common. The first is conceit (*māna*): a title or a spiritual role becomes proof of superiority, and feedback becomes an insult. The second is false humility: refusing responsibility because "a good

practitioner should not seek position," even when one is well suited to serve.

The mindful response is the solid rock of verse 81. Praise and blame are weather, not identity. Feedback is treated as a guide to hidden treasure (verse 76), and a role is accepted, as Chì Mai accepted hers, as a form of service with clear conditions. The leader's first conquest is self-conquest (verse 103).

Situation	Automatic reaction	Mindful response	Supporting teaching
Receiving a title	"Now I am above others."	"What contribution does this role let me make?"	Dhp 260–261: qualities, not grey hair
Critical feedback	Defensiveness, resentment	"Show me the behaviour; this may be treasure."	Dhp 76
Offered responsibility	"Seeking position is unspiritual."	"Can I serve well here, on clear conditions?"	AN 4.70: the lead bull
Public praise	Elation, then fear of losing it	"No one is wholly praised or blamed."	Dhp 81, 228

Chapter Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- A title is a place in a structure; purpose is the distinctive contribution you make (Craig & Snook, 2014).
- A good purpose statement would survive a change of business card.
- Find your purpose in recurring scenes: early absorption, hard moments, current energy.
- Feedback reveals blind spots, but must focus on behaviour, not self-image (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).
- Turn the verbs of your statement into observable commitments, especially under pressure.
- Plan from five years to one year, three to six months and thirty days; specific goals raise performance (Locke & Latham, 2002).
- Dhp 260–261: one is an elder by qualities, not by grey hair.
- AN 4.70: when the lead bull goes straight, the herd goes straight.
- The Professor's Comment: stand like a rock in praise and blame; accept roles as service, not as proof of worth.

Review Questions and Answers

1. What is the difference between a title, a role and a purpose?

A title is your place in the organisation, a role is the responsibilities you take on, and purpose is the distinctive contribution you want to make.

2. What test checks whether a purpose statement is truly yours, not your title's?

Whether it would still be valid if your business card changed tomorrow.

3. What three clues from your story help reveal your purpose?

An activity that absorbed you before you sought recognition, a difficulty and what you protected in it, and a current task that gives you energy.

4. What does the Johari window's "blind spot" contain?

Things others know about you that you do not know yourself.

5. What did Kluger and DeNisi find about feedback?

It improves performance on average, but in more than a third of cases it makes performance worse, especially when it targets self-image rather than the task.

6. How should you respond when someone says you "control too much"?

Ask which specific behaviour gives that impression, seeking examples rather than verdicts.

7. What are the five levels of the Craig and Snook planning funnel?

Personal statement, three-to-five-year direction, one-year result, three-to-six-month capabilities and relationships, and a thirty-day action.

8. What did Locke and Latham conclude about goals?

Specific, challenging goals lead to higher performance than vague goals, given commitment, feedback and ability.

9. According to Dhammapada 261, what makes someone truly an elder?

Truthfulness, virtue, inoffensiveness, restraint, self-mastery, freedom from defilements, and wisdom.

10. What image does the Buddha use in AN 4.70 to describe leadership?

Cattle crossing a river: if the lead bull goes straight, all follow straight; if it goes crooked, all go crooked.

Questions for Reflection

1. Like Chi Mai, where do you already lead without a title? What do you actually do there?

2. Recall a childhood activity that absorbed you completely. What trait from that scene still appears in your work?

3. Whom could you ask this month for honest observations, and which of the four questions will you use?

4. Write the three verbs that best express your leadership purpose. For each, name one behaviour others could see.

5. When you are praised or blamed, how long does the reaction last? What would it take to stand more like the rock in verse 81?

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CHAPTER 7

Supporting Other People's Sense of Purpose



"Good friends, companions, and associates are the whole of the spiritual life."

Upaḍḍha Sutta, SN 45.2

A Story from Daily Life: The Father Who Did Not Lecture

Kevin, nineteen, came home from his second year of engineering school at Thanksgiving and announced at dinner that he wanted to drop out. His father, Mr. Trần, had driven a delivery truck for twenty years so his son could study engineering. The table went silent. Kevin's mother looked at her husband, expecting an explosion.

Mr. Trần had prepared a speech in his head on the drive back from the airport. Instead, he heard himself ask one question: "Which class this semester made you forget to check your phone?" Kevin was surprised. "Honestly? The materials lab. When we broke things to see why they failed." "And which one made you want to quit?" "Calculus at 8 a.m. with three hundred people. I'm failing it."

They talked until midnight. Kevin did not drop out. He moved calculus to a smaller evening section, joined the materials lab as a student assistant, and called home in February to say he had found the part of engineering he wanted to do. His father never

gave the speech. Years later, Kevin said that question was the most useful thing anyone had ever asked him.



Figure 7.1. One good question at midnight did more than the speech Mr. Trần had prepared.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Open a purpose conversation by asking, not advising.
- Use five themes (strengths, enjoyment, value, progress, relationships) to help others name their own purpose.
- Recognise the qualities of relationships that sustain purpose.

Ask Before Offering Advice

A conversation about purpose does not begin with a solution. It begins when the other person has enough time to describe what matters to them, what gives them energy, and which part of their work has stopped fitting. Kristi Hedges (2017) proposes conversations built around strengths, enjoyment, value, progress and relationships. The manager, parent or friend does not have to

discover anyone's purpose; they help the person find their own words for it.

Five Themes for a Purpose Conversation



After Hedges (2017)

Figure 7.2. Five themes for a purpose conversation. Listening sits at the centre; each theme has an opening question.

CASE NOTE: YOUSSEF AND MAITE

"If you were in my place, you would ask for a transfer," Youssef said in a one-to-one. His manager, Maite, did not offer an opinion on the department. She asked what he expected to find in the next role. He spoke first of tiredness, then mentioned enjoying training new staff and missing technical decisions. Over the following weeks he mentored a newcomer and attended architecture meetings, and discovered he wanted to broaden his current role rather than leave.

Listen to understand the pattern, not to produce a clever phrase. The conversation is useful when the other person leaves with a clearer observation of their own and a next step they choose themselves.

HOW TO OPEN THE CONVERSATION

- "Which part of your work has been giving you energy lately?"
- "Where do you notice you are learning or making progress?"
- "Which outcome of your work feels most useful to you?"
- "What professional relationship would you like to tend better?"
- "What would help you explore an option without having to decide today?"

EVIDENCE BOX: ASKING EVOKES COMMITMENT

Motivational interviewing, developed by William Miller and Stephen Rollnick (2013), is an evidence-based counselling method built on one principle: people are more likely to change when they hear themselves state their own reasons for change than when they are told what to do. Direct advice often provokes resistance. Open questions, reflective listening and summaries draw out the person's own motivation.

Strengths and Enjoyment

A purpose conversation begins with what is already present, not with what is missing. Strengths are not only technical skills. They include ways of working: bringing order to complexity, listening carefully, spotting risks, explaining clearly, staying calm when the team gets stuck.

Answers are more valuable when grounded in recent facts. "When did you feel especially capable?" yields more than "What

do you like?", because it requires a situation, a behaviour and an outcome.

CASE NOTE: LIDIA AND DARÍO

Lidia assumed she liked analysis because she was good at it. Her manager, Darío, asked her to note for two weeks which tasks she handled easily, which energised her and which exhausted her. The record showed she came alive when she could prepare for and take part in negotiations. She began joining supplier meetings instead of only sending reports beforehand.

TWO LISTS TO GET STARTED

- What I'm good at: tasks you handle with ease, even when they require effort.
- What energises me: activities that spark attention, curiosity or the desire to continue.
- Look for the overlap between both lists.

EVIDENCE BOX: POSITIVE EMOTIONS BROADEN

Barbara Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory (2001) holds that positive emotions such as interest and joy temporarily widen the range of thoughts and actions a person considers, and over time build lasting personal resources: skills, relationships and resilience. Asking someone about what energises them is not small talk; it opens the mental space in which new options become visible.

Value and Progress

Purpose becomes clearer when a person can name whom their work serves. Hedges suggests two questions: "Who does what

you do serve?" places the task in a web of relationships; "Where does it take you?" connects it to the future.

CASE NOTE: BOUBACAR AND REBECA

Boubacar, a data analyst, saw that his work helped fine-tune delivery routes but could not name the skills he was building. His manager, Rebeca, asked him to write the current effects of his analyses on one sheet and the abilities he wanted to strengthen on another. He saw he was learning to present decisions to non-technical people. Rebeca began inviting him to operations meetings to explain the reasoning behind each proposal.

Progress does not always mean promotion. It may mean understanding a process better, gaining autonomy, broadening a relationship, or moving closer to work that is not yet central to the role. The conversation succeeds when it ends with a verifiable observation: not "I want to grow," but "I want to present a monthly recommendation and check whether the team uses it."

TWO QUESTIONS THAT CLARIFY

- Who does it serve? Name the person, team or community that receives the effect of the work.
- Where does it take you? Describe the ability, experience or responsibility to develop.
- If there is no answer, do not fill the gap with an abstract phrase: look for a concrete example.

Relationships That Support a Purpose

Purpose is shaped in the company of others. A task feels different when done with people who trust your judgement,

recognise your effort or share a clear way of working. Robert Putnam (2000) linked a sense of collective meaning to the ties and communities we take part in. Work does not replace other networks, but it can become an important structure of support.

CASE NOTE: AROA, SAÏD AND TOMÁS

After the same meeting, Aroa felt it had resolved questions; Saïd felt his proposals were ignored. Their manager, Tomás, spoke with each separately, then held a short session to name which contributions had been left out and how speaking time would be shared. Aroa agreed to summarise open questions before closing each meeting; Saïd agreed to bring a data-based proposal; Tomás reserved five minutes for the team to respond. The next meeting ended in an operational agreement.

EVIDENCE BOX: HOW WE RESPOND TO GOOD NEWS

Shelly Gable and colleagues (2004) found that the way people respond when a partner shares good news predicts relationship quality. "Active-constructive" responses, showing genuine interest and asking questions, were linked to greater trust and satisfaction; passive or dismissive responses were not. In a purpose conversation, how you react to someone's small success matters as much as how you respond to their problems.

MAP OF MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

- Helps me to think:
- Learns from me:
- I want to work more with:
- I need to nurture this relationship by:

Write names and observable behaviours, not labels such as "good colleague" or "difficult person."

The Dhamma Perspective

Voices from the Dhammapada

Do not associate with evil companions; do not seek the fellowship of the vile. Associate with the good friends; seek the fellowship of noble men.

Dhammapada, verse 78

Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is a law eternal.

Dhammapada, verse 5

Verse 5 belongs in any conversation where two people see the same meeting in opposite ways. Tomás did not choose a winner; he lowered the temperature and restored the conditions for cooperation.

From the Nikāyas

In the Upaḍḍha Sutta (SN 45.2), Ānanda suggests that good friendship is half of the spiritual life. The Buddha corrects him: "Good friends, companions, and associates are the whole of the spiritual life." With a good friend, a practitioner can develop the entire Noble Eightfold Path.



Figure 7.3. A friend worth keeping does what is hard to do and does not leave you when the path gets steep.

The Mitta Sutta (AN 7.35) lists seven qualities of a friend worth keeping.

Seven Marks of a Friend Worth Keeping

Mitta Sutta (AN 7.35)



Figure 7.4. Seven marks of a friend worth keeping (AN 7.35). These are also the marks of a mentor who supports another person's purpose.

In the Udāyī Sutta (AN 5.159), the Buddha tells Ānanda that teaching others is not easy, and that five qualities should first be established in oneself: teach step by step; explain the method; speak out of kindness; do not teach for personal gain; and teach without harming oneself or others. These five qualities are a complete guide for anyone supporting another person's search for purpose.

In the Upakkilesa Sutta (MN 128), the Buddha visits three monks, Anuruddha, Nandiya and Kimbila, who live in exceptional harmony. Anuruddha explains that he keeps his body, speech and mind kind toward his companions both in public and in private, and sets aside what he wishes to do in order to do what they wish. They are "different in body, but one in mind." This is the Nikāyas' picture of a team whose relationships sustain everyone's purpose.

The Professor's Comment: Reacting When Others Struggle

When someone we love is lost, the automatic reaction is to fix. In religious families this often takes a particular form: preaching. "You must accept your kamma." "Just chant more and it will pass." "In my day we did not complain." These responses may be well meant, but they deliver a teaching without listening, and they often leave the other person feeling judged by both family and faith.

The mindful response follows AN 5.159. It is gradual (one question, not a sermon), kind, free of self-interest (not "I sacrificed for your degree"), and harmless to both sides. Mr. Trần's question about the materials lab was a step-by-step

teaching in the Udāyī style. The Dhamma is offered, if at all, after the person has been heard.

Situation	Automatic reaction	Mindful response	Supporting teaching
A child wants to quit	Lecture about sacrifice	"Which class made you forget your phone?"	AN 5.159: step by step, with kindness
A colleague is discouraged	"Just accept your kamma."	"Where are you learning or progressing?"	AN 7.35: does not look down on you
A team conflict	Choosing a winner	Hear each side, then set shared rules	Dhp 5: non-hatred; MN 128
A friend's good news	Distracted "that's nice"	Ask questions; share the joy	<i>Muditā</i> (sympathetic joy)

Chapter Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- A purpose conversation begins with questions and listening, not solutions.
- Hedges's five themes: strengths, enjoyment, value, progress and relationships.
- People commit more to reasons they state themselves (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).
- Ground answers in recent facts: "When did you feel especially capable?"
- Positive emotions broaden thinking and build resources (Fredrickson, 2001).
- Two clarifying questions: Who does it serve? Where does it take you?
- Responding warmly to others' good news strengthens relationships (Gable et al., 2004).
- SN 45.2: good friendship is the whole of the spiritual life. AN 7.35: seven marks of a true friend.
- AN 5.159: teach step by step, explain the method, with kindness, without gain, without harm.
- The Professor's Comment: listen before you preach; offer the Dhamma after the person feels heard.

Review Questions and Answers

1. According to Hedges, what is the manager's role in a purpose conversation?

Not to discover the other person's purpose, but to help them find their own words for it.

2. Name Hedges's five themes.

Strengths, enjoyment, value, progress and relationships.

3. What principle underlies motivational interviewing?

People are more likely to change when they hear themselves state their own reasons than when told what to do.

4. Why is "When did you feel especially capable?" better than "What do you like?"

Because it asks for a recent situation, a behaviour and an outcome, which yields concrete evidence.

5. What does broaden-and-build theory say about positive emotions?

They widen the range of thoughts and actions considered and, over time, build lasting resources.

6. What are the two questions that clarify value and progress?

"Who does it serve?" and "Where does it take you?"

7. What is an "active-constructive" response to good news?

Showing genuine interest and asking questions, which is linked to greater trust and relationship satisfaction.

8. What did the Buddha say to Ānanda in SN 45.2 about good friendship?

That good friends, companions and associates are not half but the whole of the spiritual life.

9. Name four of the seven qualities of a friend in AN 7.35.

Any four of: gives what is hard to give, does what is hard to do, endures what is hard to endure, shares their secrets, keeps your secrets, does not abandon you in misfortune, does not look down on you.

10. What five qualities does AN 5.159 require before teaching others?

Teach step by step, explain the method, speak out of kindness, not for personal gain, and without harming oneself or others.

Questions for Reflection

1. **Think of someone close to you who is struggling with direction. What single open question could you ask them this week?**

2. **When has someone helped you most by asking rather than telling? What did they ask?**

3. **Make your two lists: what you are good at and what energises you. Where do they overlap?**

4. **Which person in your life shows several of the seven marks of a true friend? Have you told them?**

5. Do you tend to preach, fix or listen when someone you love is lost? What would change if you followed the five qualities of AN 5.159?

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CHAPTER 8

Making Sure Purpose Reaches the Team



"Think not lightly of good, saying, 'It will not come to me.' Drop by drop is the water pot filled."

Dhammapada, verse 122

A Story from Daily Life: The Five-Minute Huddle

At a family noodle restaurant on Bellaire Boulevard, the dinner rush used to end in shouting. Orders went out wrong, the dishwasher blamed the line cook, the line cook blamed the server, and the owner, Mrs. Diệp, blamed everyone. Two good cooks quit in one summer.

Her daughter, back from a hospitality course, suggested something simple: five minutes standing together before service, every day. Three questions only. What went well yesterday? What got stuck? What one thing will we try today? Nobody would be scolded in the huddle. Mrs. Diệp agreed reluctantly and promised to speak last.

The first week was awkward. In the second, the dishwasher, a quiet man of sixty, said the bowls ran out at 7:15 every night because the warm racks were too far from the pass. They moved the racks. Bowls stopped running out. By autumn, the huddle had produced eleven small changes, and nobody had quit. Mrs. Diệp said she had learned that "the kitchen is smarter than I am, if I let it talk."



Figure 8.1. Five minutes, three questions, nobody scolded: the kitchen becomes smarter than its owner.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Build curiosity, high standards and trust as the three conditions of team meaning.
- Check values fit by observing what is rewarded and what is penalised.
- Protect everyday progress and use organisational purpose to decide what not to do.

Curiosity, Standards and Trust

A team finds more meaning when it can explore possibilities, raise the quality of its work and experiment without fear of automatic punishment. Lewis Garrad and Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic (2017) identify curiosity, high standards and trust as conditions that make work meaningful. They depend on one another.

- **Curiosity** questions what the team takes for granted.

- **High standards** define what must be done well, without meaning longer hours or fault-finding out of context.
- **Trust** lets people act without being watched at every step. Autonomy, as Pink (2009) notes, needs clear limits and real room to decide.

Explore · Elevate · Trust

After Garrad & Chamorro-Premuzic (2017); Edmondson (1999)

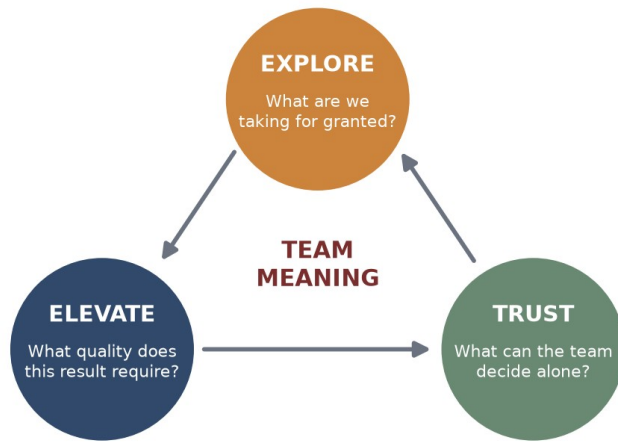


Figure 8.2. Explore, elevate, trust. Review all three questions before closing any project.

CASE NOTE: MARTÍN AND YASMINE

"We can try it, but I don't want it to fail," said Martín, the product lead. The team heard that any mistake would carry a personal cost. Yasmine, a designer, asked to clarify the test's scope. They launched to a small group, defined two success criteria and set a review date, without turning the trial into an individual evaluation. The test revealed a navigation problem no meeting had found. From then on, every proposal included safe room to experiment.

EVIDENCE BOX: PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Amy Edmondson (1999) studied 51 work teams in a manufacturing company. Teams with higher psychological safety, a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking, engaged in more learning behaviour: asking questions, seeking feedback, reporting errors and discussing problems. That learning behaviour, in turn, was associated with better team performance. Mrs. Diệp's rule "nobody is scolded in the huddle" is a rule of psychological safety.

Values That Fit Well

The fit between a person and their work depends on more than ability. It also matters whether the team's way of deciding, relating and resolving conflict is consistent with the values the person considers important. Fit does not mean agreeing on everything; it means being able to disagree without destroying cooperation.

CASE NOTE: SALMA AND GONZALO

"Here, what matters is delivering, not complicating things with explanations," said Gonzalo, the operations director, when Salma, a new quality engineer, asked why a safety review had been skipped. Instead of accepting this as the culture, she asked the team to review the criterion together: recent incidents, the cost of delay and the consequences of shipping without the check. They kept the deadline but changed the process: critical reviews now have one owner and a defined maximum time.

To check fit, observe which behaviours are rewarded and which are penalised, even when nobody says so. The real culture

appears in those responses, especially when haste, money or risk is involved.

QUESTIONS FOR CHECKING THE FIT

- Which behaviour is truly rewarded here?
- What happens when someone disagrees?
- Which value am I unwilling to sacrifice?
- What do I need to clarify before accepting a responsibility?

Everyday Progress

The meaning of work depends not only on final results. It is also nourished by moving forward on something that matters, even when progress is small.

EVIDENCE BOX: THE PROGRESS PRINCIPLE

Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer (2011) analysed nearly 12,000 daily diary entries from 238 knowledge workers in 26 project teams. Of all the events that could lift people's inner work life (their emotions, motivation and perceptions), the most powerful was making progress in meaningful work, even small progress. On days when workers reported their best moods, progress was present 76 percent of the time. Setbacks had an even stronger negative effect than progress had a positive one.

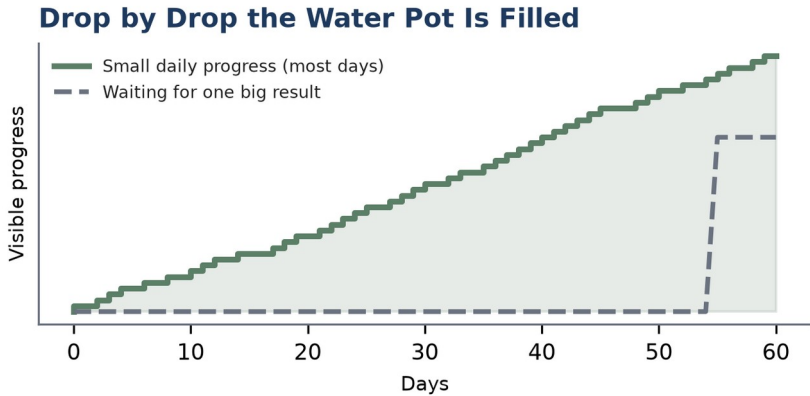


Illustration of Dhp 122 and the progress principle (Amabile & Kramer, 2011)

Figure 8.3. Drop by drop. Small, visible progress sustains energy far better than waiting for a single large result.

Progress needs protection. A manager can remove an unnecessary approval, clarify a priority, secure a tool, or prevent an unrelated emergency from undoing work already begun.

CASE NOTE: AINA AND JOEL

The project board was covered with red notes, and no one could find the current version. Aina, the communications lead, asked the team to separate real blockers from tasks simply pending. A legal review was holding up five pieces, though only one carried significant risk. Joel prepared that piece for immediate review, and Aina authorised the other four to proceed under agreed criteria. Two days later the four were ready and the fifth had an answer.

Avoid empty enthusiasm. "Good work" says little; "we reduced incidents because you documented the change before deploying it" links action to effect. End short meetings with three items:

Item	Question
Obstacle	What has brought the work to a halt?
Progress	What has changed in a verifiable way?
Next step	What one action, and who is responsible?

A Purpose That Also Organises

A company needs to sell to survive, but its purpose can guide how it does so. Commercial activity gains direction when it connects the product to a concrete, verifiable contribution. Blake Mycoskie (2011) founded TOMS with a model that linked the sale of shoes to donating shoes to children who needed them, so that the contribution was part of the company's commercial identity. The company later revised its giving model; the lesson here is not to copy it but to see how a cause can enter the architecture of a business.

CASE NOTE: LEIRE AND ABDOULAYE

An expansion map listed three new cities but had no box for expected impact. Leire, head of business development, asked how they would know whether a new partnership strengthened the social contribution or only sales. Abdoulaye, in operations, proposed two criteria: traceability of the aid and local partners' ability to sustain it. The team kept one profitable proposal and rejected another that could not show where resources ended up.

An organisational purpose must also say what will not be done. If every decision fits under the same phrase, the phrase gives no guidance.

WHEN THE MISSION GUIDES A DECISION

- Define the contribution you want to protect.
- Decide how you will verify that it exists.
- Apply the criterion when choosing products, partners or markets.
- Accept that a consistent decision may mean giving up an opportunity.

The Dhamma Perspective

Voices from the Dhammapada



Figure 8.4. Drop by drop the water pot is filled (Dhp 122).

Think not lightly of good, saying, "It will not come to me." Drop by drop is the water pot filled. Likewise, the wise man, gathering it little by little, fills himself with good.

Dhammapada, verse 122

Verse 122 is the progress principle stated twenty-five centuries before Amabile and Kramer. Its companion, verse 121, gives the warning: small faults also accumulate drop by drop.

To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and to cleanse one's mind — this is the teaching of the Buddhas.

Dhammapada, verse 183

Verse 183 is a model mission statement. It names what to avoid, what to cultivate and what to purify: three clear criteria for decisions.

Blessed is the birth of the Buddhas; blessed is the enunciation of the sacred Teaching; blessed is the harmony in the Order, and blessed is the spiritual pursuit of the united truth-seeker.

Dhammapada, verse 194

From the Nikāyas

In the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN 16), the Buddha names seven conditions under which the Vajjian republic would prosper and not decline. They are among the oldest recorded principles of good governance, and several translate directly into team practice.

Conditions of Non-Decline for a Team

The Vajjian principles (DN 16) translated into team practice

- 1 Meet often, attend fully** regular, well-attended reviews
- 2 Meet and part in harmony** decide together, act together
- 3 Keep agreed rules** change norms with care
- 4 Honour experience** listen to elders and mentors
- 5 Protect the vulnerable** no exploitation or harassment
- 6 Respect what is sacred** honour shared values and rituals
- 7 Support the wise** make room for people of integrity

Figure 8.5. Seven conditions of non-decline (DN 16), adapted for a team. The first two, meeting often and acting in harmony, are Mrs. Diêp's huddle.

The Buddha then applied similar conditions to the monastic community. The Saṅgha also built psychological safety into its calendar. At the end of the rains retreat, monks perform the *pavāraṇā* ceremony, in which each member formally invites the others to point out any fault they have seen, heard or suspected. Feedback is not an attack; it is an invitation.

In the *Vaṇijjā Sutta* (AN 5.177), the Buddha names five trades a lay follower should not engage in: trade in weapons, in living beings, in meat, in intoxicants and in poison. Right livelihood, in other words, begins with a clear list of what an enterprise will not do. This is precisely the test of a useful organisational purpose.

The Professor's Comment: Reacting as a Group

Teams have reactions just as individuals do. When a mistake surfaces, the automatic group reaction is blame: find the person, punish the person. In religious communities, blame can take on moral weight: an error becomes a sign of bad character or poor merit, so people hide mistakes to protect their reputation. The result is the opposite of psychological safety.

The mindful group response is the *pavāraṇā* spirit: errors are named early, without humiliation, so that the whole community can correct course. Faults are treated as drops that can be removed one at a time, not as stains on a person's worth. Harmony (*sāmaggi*) is not the absence of disagreement; it is the ability to disagree and still act together, like the Vajjians who "met in harmony and dispersed in harmony."

Situation	Automatic group reaction	Mindful group response	Supporting teaching
A mistake surfaces	Find and blame the person	"What in the process allowed this?"	<i>Pavāraṇā</i> : invite correction
A new idea is risky	"Don't let it fail."	Small test, clear criteria, review date	Edmondson (1999)
Values conflict under deadline	Silence; "that's the culture"	Review the criterion together	DN 16: decide in harmony
Growth tempts the mission	"Every sale is good."	"What will we not do?"	AN 5.177; Dhṛp 183

Chapter Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Team meaning grows from curiosity, high standards and trust (Garrad & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2017).
- Psychological safety enables learning behaviour and better performance (Edmondson, 1999).
- Values fit is revealed by what is rewarded and what is penalised, especially under pressure.
- Progress in meaningful work is the strongest daily motivator (Amabile & Kramer, 2011).
- Protect progress; end meetings with obstacle, progress and next step.
- A useful organisational purpose also states what will not be done.
- Dhp 122: drop by drop the pot is filled. Dhp 183: avoid evil, cultivate good, purify the mind.
- DN 16: the seven conditions of non-decline; meet often and act in harmony.
- AN 5.177: right livelihood begins with what an enterprise refuses to do.
- The Professor's Comment: replace group blame with the *pavāraṇā* spirit of invited correction.

Review Questions and Answers

1. What three conditions do Garrad and Chamorro-Premuzic link to meaningful teamwork?

Curiosity, high standards and trust.

2. What is psychological safety?

A shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking, such as asking questions or admitting errors.

3. What did Edmondson find in her study of 51 teams?

Psychological safety was linked to more learning behaviour, which was associated with better team performance.

4. How can you discover a team's real values?

By observing which behaviours are rewarded and which are penalised, especially when haste, money or risk is involved.

5. What did Amabile and Kramer identify as the most powerful daily motivator?

Making progress in meaningful work, even small progress.

6. What three items should end a short progress meeting?

The obstacle, the verifiable progress, and the next step with a responsible person.

7. Why must an organisational purpose say what will not be done?

Because a phrase that fits every decision gives no guidance; useful purpose sets priorities and limits.

8. What does Dhammapada 183 name as the teaching of the Buddhas?

To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and to cleanse one's mind.

9. Name two of the seven conditions of non-decline from DN 16.

Any two of: meeting often with full attendance; meeting and dispersing in harmony; keeping established rules; honouring elders; protecting the vulnerable; respecting shrines; supporting the worthy.

10. What is the pavāraṇā ceremony, and what does it teach teams?

At the end of the rains retreat, monks invite others to point out faults seen, heard or suspected; it teaches that feedback can be invited rather than feared.

Questions for Reflection

1. **What would a five-minute daily huddle with three questions change in your team, family or community?**

2. **In your workplace, what behaviour is truly rewarded? Is it the same as what is officially praised?**

3. **Name one small piece of progress from this week that nobody acknowledged. How could it be made visible?**

4. **If your team or organisation wrote its own version of Dhammapada 183, what would it avoid, cultivate and purify?**

5. When your group discovers a mistake, does it blame or invite correction? What first step would bring it closer to the pavāraṇā spirit?

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CLOSING

Keep Fine-Tuning Your Course



"One by one, little by little, moment by moment, a wise man should remove his own impurities, as a smith removes his dross from silver."

Dhammapada, verse 239

A Story from Daily Life: Lan, One Year Later

A year after the morning with the elderly customer and his pill bottles, Lan, the pharmacy technician from the Introduction, still packs two lunch boxes at six. She still works at the same pharmacy. But some things have changed.

She asked her manager whether she could prepare simple medication cards in Vietnamese and Spanish for patients who struggled with English labels. He agreed to a three-month trial. The pharmacy now keeps a small box of her cards by the counter. She has started a short evening course in medical interpretation, which she pays for from a part of her salary she used to spend without noticing. On Saturday mornings she no longer picks up extra shifts; she goes to the temple with her mother.

On the last day of each month she sits at the kitchen table for fifteen minutes with a notebook. She asks four questions and writes one line for each. Some months the answers are disappointing. She writes them anyway. "I don't know if this is my destiny," she told a friend. "But now I can explain what I want to protect in it."



Figure C.1. Fifteen minutes, four questions, one decision: Lan's monthly review.

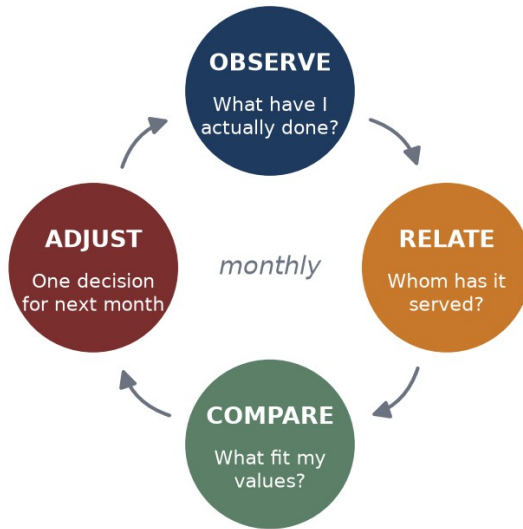
Purpose Is a Relationship You Keep Revisiting

Purpose is not a phrase written once and considered settled. It is a relationship you keep revisiting among what you value, what you do and the effect your work has on others. John Coleman (2017) argues that purpose is built over time and changes with life stages. Dan Pontefract (2016) adds that the fit among person, role and organisation must be observed, because none of the three stays the same for long.

The review must also recognise limits. Purposeful work does not justify permanent availability, damage to your health, or the steady sacrifice of the relationships that sustain your life.

CASE NOTE: IRATI, TECHNICAL OFFICE MANAGER

"I do not know whether this position is my destiny, but now I can explain what I want to protect in it," said Irati after her monthly review. She had realised she enjoyed resolving problems between departments and needed time for her family. The next month she stopped accepting every meeting, asked to join process improvement, and kept one afternoon free of calls. The work did not change completely, but her way of being in it became more deliberate.

A Monthly Review in Four Steps

Little by little, as a smith removes dross from silver (Dhp 239)

Figure C.2. A monthly review in four steps. Fifteen minutes, four questions, one decision.

Step	Question	Chapter that develops it
Observe	What have I actually done?	Chapter 5: the say–do gap
Relate	Whom has it served?	Chapters 1 and 4: the recipient
Compare	What has aligned with my values?	Chapters 3 and 6: the statement
Adjust	What one decision will I make next month?	Chapters 2 and 8: crafting and progress

You can revisit your purpose whenever you change jobs, managers, family stage or interests. Putting it into words again does not erase what came before; it shows which part remains alive and which needs a new form.

The Dhamma Perspective

One by one, little by little, moment by moment, a wise man should remove his own impurities, as a smith removes his dross from silver.

Dhammapada, verse 239



Figure C.3. As a smith removes dross from silver, little by little (Dhp 239).

The silversmith does not purify the metal in one blow. He heats, skims and heats again. The monthly review is the same work: one skimming at a time.

Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.

Dhammapada, verse 2

The book began with this verse and returns to it. Every tool in these chapters, from job crafting to the Johari window to the five-minute huddle, is in the end a way of training the mind that meets the work.

In the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN 16), the Buddha's last words to his disciples were: "All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness!" Purpose, too, is compounded: of conditions, relationships and choices that change. That is not a

reason for despair. It is the reason the work of review never ends, and the reason it is always possible to begin again.

The Professor's Comment: The Whole Model in One Page

Across eight chapters, the same fork has appeared again and again. Something happens: a dull task, a lost passion, a critical comment, a team mistake. A feeling arises. A story follows. Then comes the moment of choice.

Chapter	Typical trigger	Automatic reaction	Mindful response
Introduction	The day feels empty	"My life is wasted."	Treat it as a feeling and as information
1	Comparing pay	Envy, sense of injustice	Separate the economic and existential questions
2	Lost energy	"I chose wrongly; I am lazy."	Tune the string; avoid the second arrow
3	No clear calling	Waiting for a sign	Build with present intention
4	Humble work, endless requests	Shame or self-sacrifice	Right livelihood; protect self to protect others
5	A say–do gap	Excuse or condemnation	The clean mirror
6	Praise, blame, position	Conceit or false humility	The unshaken rock
7	Someone else is lost	Preaching, fixing	Ask, listen, teach step by step
8	A team mistake	Group blame	Invited correction

The psychological–religious reaction is never only psychological and never only religious. The mind reacts with its habits, and faith can either amplify those habits or interrupt them. Used well, faith supplies exactly what the mindful route needs: confidence to pause, a teaching to apply, and a community to return to.

Final Summary

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER FROM THE WHOLE BOOK

- Purpose is the relationship among values, actions and effects, and it is built, not found.
- Meaning has many sources; pay is one, but not the whole.
- Lost passion calls for precise review: exhaustion, repetition or structural mismatch?
- Every task can be described at several levels; move up for meaning and down for action.
- A job need not be a calling; service needs limits.
- Close the say–do gap one observable change at a time.
- Leadership is a contribution, not a title; ask for feedback as treasure.
- Help others by asking before advising.
- Teams find meaning through curiosity, standards, trust and small, visible progress.
- At every fork, choose the mindful response over the automatic reaction.

Review Questions and Answers

1. What three elements does purpose connect?

What you value, what you do, and the effect your work has on others.

2. What limits must a review of purpose recognise?

Purposeful work does not justify permanent availability, damage to health, or the steady sacrifice of sustaining relationships.

3. What are the four steps of the monthly review?

Observe, relate, compare and adjust.

4. When should you revisit your purpose?

Whenever you change jobs, managers, family stage or interests, and at regular intervals such as monthly.

5. What changed for Lan between the Introduction and the Closing?

She proposed medication cards, began a course in medical interpretation, protected Saturday mornings, and started a monthly review.

6. What image does Dhammapada 239 use for gradual self-improvement?

A smith removing dross from silver, little by little.

7. What were the Buddha's last words in DN 16?

"All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness!"

8. What is the "fork" in the Professor's Comment?

The moment of choice after an event, a feeling and a story, between automatic reaction and mindful response.

9. How can faith support the mindful route?

By supplying confidence to pause, a teaching to apply, and a community to return to.

10. Name three tools from this book that can be used in the "adjust" step.

For example: a workable job-crafting request, a seven-day change, an if-then plan, a thirty-day step, or a team huddle.

Questions for Reflection

1. Looking back over the eight chapters, which single idea has changed how you see your work?

2. Which automatic reaction from the summary table do you recognise most in yourself?

3. Write your provisional purpose statement as it stands today. What is still missing?

- 4. Schedule your first monthly review. When and where will you sit with the four questions?**

- 5. A year from now, like Lan, what would you like to be able to say you have protected?**

Glossary of Pāli Terms

Term	Meaning
<i>ājīva</i> (sammā)	Right livelihood: earning a living honestly and without harm
<i>appamāda</i>	Heedfulness, earnest diligence
<i>dāna</i>	Generosity, giving
<i>kalyāṇamittatā</i>	Admirable friendship
<i>kamma</i>	Intentional action and its results
<i>lokadhamma</i>	The eight worldly conditions: gain and loss, fame and disrepute, praise and blame, pleasure and pain
<i>māna</i>	Conceit, comparing oneself as better, equal or worse
<i>muditā</i>	Sympathetic joy in others' happiness
<i>papañca</i>	Mental proliferation; the stories the mind builds on experience
<i>pavāraṇā</i>	Invitation to admonish, held at the end of the rains retreat
<i>phassa</i>	Contact between sense, object and consciousness
<i>sāmaggī</i>	Harmony, concord within a group
<i>santuṭṭhi</i>	Contentment
<i>sati</i>	Mindfulness, present-moment awareness
<i>taṇhā</i>	Craving
<i>uṭṭhāna</i>	Initiative, energetic effort
<i>vedanā</i>	Feeling tone: pleasant, painful or neutral
<i>yoniso manasikāra</i>	Wise attention

About the Author

Bhikkhu Visuddhamma is a simple Buddhist monk. He teaches how to bring meditation into daily life, building long-lasting happiness, both inwardly and outwardly, within each person, each family and the whole community.

Editorial Note

This textbook draws on research into purpose, meaning and passion at work, including the essays collected in Harvard Business Review's *Purpose, Meaning, and Passion* (2018). The daily-life stories in this book are illustrative composites. This book is not affiliated with, sponsored by or endorsed by Harvard Business Review or Harvard Business Publishing.

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“Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.”

— Dhammapada, verse 2

LIVE WITH PURPOSE

The work is done and the inbox is empty, yet something is still missing. This book helps you look again at the link between what you value, what you do, and the people your work serves.

Through everyday stories – a pharmacy technician, a city bus driver, a grandmother writing recipe cards, a family noodle shop – it brings modern psychology together with the Buddha's teaching in the Dhammapada and the Nikāyas.

INSIDE THIS BOOK

- 10 everyday stories and 20 illustrations
- 24 diagrams that make each idea clear at a glance
- The Professor's Comment on psychological–religious reactions
- 100 review questions and 50 reflection questions

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