

What You Should Want From Life

The great secret of getting what you want from life is to know what you want and believe you can have it.
- Norman Vincent Peale

That's pretty easy, right? After all, you have no possibility of getting what you want if you don't believe you can get it.

The problem is that many people--maybe even a majority, but the situation has not been studied sufficiently to say for certain--don't know what they want from life.

Ask most people and their answers will be exactly or somehow related to happiness and money. They'll even say "I know that money can't buy happiness, but I'd like to give it a try." They have no idea how they might go about getting that money they would like, nor do they have a plan to put into effect that would make them different from the people in all the tragic stories they have heard about people who became suddenly rich.

Their way to get money, for most who don't have real plans, is to gamble. Lotteries are the favourite sport. The fact that they might have a better chance of being hit by lightning and survive twice in their lifetime than of winning a lottery deters them not. Whatever amount of cash they spend on lottery tickets they tell themselves is their small way of treating themselves.

These people who would like to have lots of money don't have a viable way to get it. And if they did, they would likely blow it all or allow it to ruin their lives.

Happiness, though, should be a grand objective, shouldn't it? Sure. What's happiness? The people who wish for it have no clear concept of what happiness is, how they could recognize it in others or how they could become happy themselves.

Money, happiness and all the attendant benefits that go with them are artificial needs or life objectives created by industries to sell their products. Think not? Just watch how much "fun" people have shopping for themselves. What do you do when you're feeling blue? Take more vitamin D? No, go shopping. The ads and commercials tell us how to live our lives.

Most people who conduct their lives like this find themselves in the latter years of middle age (they never get old, that would be against what the commercials teach) settling for belief that they must have found happiness because they have followed what the advertising told them to do for so many years.

Do you want my opinion about what you should want from life? If you silently answered Yes to that question, then you are still prepared to take someone else's word for what you should want from your life rather than to make up your mind for yourself, to be in control of your own future, your own destiny, your own purpose in life.

Money and happiness are shallow objectives for life. They're selfish, perhaps even narcissistic. People who choose these as life goals have nothing much to show for their lives when they die. And that is exactly what industries want of us, to be spent out.

If you want to get some ideas about objectives for your own life, ask a few people who have worked to improve the lives of others. That might be by mentoring, helping in a homeless shelter, giving help to kids or adults who are trying to learn to read, offering to help elderly people who are having difficulty holding their own in the house they have lived in for decades or any of myriad ways that people help each other.

Don't look to advertising for answers. Any situation where people want you to give money to achieve happiness will not likely deliver the goods for you.

It's your life. You should make it mean something while you can.

Bill Allin

Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a book about how, what and when to teach children the knowledge and skills they need to lead healthy and fulfilling lives as adults (and as kids).

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