

Self-Awareness: The Key to Discovering Your Purpose

Unless you are aware of who you are—your Personal Style, gifts, talents, passions, desires, values, self-worth, strengths, and so on—you will never be able to truly live a life On Purpose.

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I wrote this book to provide you with a roadmap, processes, and insights to increase and establish your levels of self-awareness. It is in the state of being fully self-aware that you 100% know who you are and where you can make confident decisions that support your purpose and calling. However, many are overwhelmed by trying to “know it all at once,” so I will do my best to segment self-awareness pieces that will assist you on your Quest for Purpose.

To become fully self-aware, we must be in a constant growth (learning) mindset, as we never fully arrive, but rather are continually arriving; life is an active-tense experience and never a destination. At some point, everyone must go through this self-discovery process. Yes, some have had it come to them quickly and others more slowly (and maybe even painfully), but all of us who are living our lives On Purpose have been through this process of becoming self-aware.

In my younger years, I was not nearly as self-aware as I am now. I grew up on a dairy farm, and after finishing agricultural college, I assumed the dairy industry would become my life for the rest of my years. Yet, even at 16, I already had clues—many that I did not fully acknowledge—that I was to be a communicator and encourage and help others live their lives On Purpose!

I first started to learn about the power of self-awareness during my first few months at college. It was my first time away from home, and let’s just say that I “let loose.” I became boisterous and loud in an attempt to be the center of attention. My quest was to have people like me, but the outcome of my actions was the opposite; people would think, “Oh, no! Here comes Ken!”

About three months into my first semester, I had a chance to sit down with one of the bright girls in our dorm. Thirty minutes into our conversation, she said, “You are not a jerk after all. In fact, you are a really nice guy.”

In complete shock, I asked her what she meant.

“Ken, you are loud, and sometimes obnoxious. You try way too hard. It really is quite irritating. But in this conversation today, you are calm, interesting, and focusing on our discussion.”

I was immature and unaware that my actions were driving people away, not bringing them closer. You don't have to be in college to become self-aware.

I am assuming that, since you have engaged this book, you want to change or improve something in your life. But getting new results is going to require change on your part. Most of us are familiar with the following definition of insanity:

The definition of insanity is continuing to do the same things over and over, expecting different results.

If you want different results, meaning living a life On (and full of) Purpose, you must **change** what you are doing and/or the way you are doing it.

Are you willing to do the work to change to realize your full potential and live your life On Purpose?

Before you can act with *purpose* and direction, you must understand what you need to change, and how to go about it.

When we are not self-aware about our own preferences, gifts, talents, and tendencies, it is impossible for us to act *intentionally*. If we are not aware, we are living life—day after day, year after year—oblivious to our natural thought patterns and beliefs.

We all have met people who are completely unaware that their behavior and conduct are inappropriate. They have no clue they are clueless.

A frequent traveler, I spot this *unawareness* on every trip . . . people who stop at the bottom of a going-up escalator, staring into space, with no idea that a line of fellow travelers is forming behind them, and people who let their carry-on bags hit each seated person in the head as they make their way down the aisle in the aircraft.

In his book, *Excuses Begone!*, Dr. Wayne Dyer said it well:

“The reason awareness of awareness is so powerful is that it immediately puts me in touch with a dimension of myself that knows that here in awareness, all things are possible.”

Dr. Dyer went on to quote a Harvard Study that tracked 84 female room attendants working in different hotels.

The women were divided into two groups.

1. For the control group, it was business as usual.
2. The second group was told that their work was “exercise.”

The control group experienced no physical improvement, despite engaging in the same activities as the second group.

The second group of ladies who recognized their work as exercise experienced significant health benefits. In just four weeks, they dropped weight and lowered their blood pressure, body fat, and body mass index.

That study reveals that our attitude (mindset)—which is linked to our awareness—can have profound effects on our overall well-being.

Awareness of our beliefs is just the beginning. What about your awareness of your style preferences, gifts, talents, passions, and all the implications they have in every part of your daily life?

Self-awareness is so predominant for success that it transcends age, intelligence, education, profession, and job level.

When you become aware, you cease being a victim of your circumstances. You own your own space.

Probably one of the most significant shifts in my awareness was the acknowledgement and recognition that not only did I enjoy writing, but with work and practice, I was actually good at it. However, in Grade 9, nothing could be further from my awareness that I was going to become a bestselling, internationally published author. (Are you kidding me?!)

Yet here I sit, writing my fourth book, with more than four million words of written content in articles, programs, and assessments. So what happened?

I always struggled with English and language, but my ninth-grade English teacher sealed my defeated mindset when she stated that I would not amount to anything, since I could not read or write. All through school, my lowest marks were found in my required English classes. In Grade 10, I technically failed English, but they still passed me into Grade 11, perhaps just to get rid of me!—at least that’s how I felt and how I remember it.

I 100% accepted the fact that I was a poor writer and inept at the English language. Regardless, if I had a hidden talent for it, the comments from others and my personal negative affirmations meant that writing was never even a remote consideration for a career and therefore never came up as an interest—that is, until I enrolled and was accepted for my MBA. I had always enjoyed learning, but my Master’s degree was project-based, which required writing a paper every month for two years. It was during this time that I discovered I had a mild case of dyslexia. No wonder I struggled with reading, spelling, and writing! All those years I was put down, and put myself down, had to do with an unknown disability. I had believed with all my heart that I was poor at English, and no one could convince me otherwise.

But for my MBA, which required writing skills, I welcomed the invention of personal computers and a program called Microsoft (MS) Word, which underlined all my misspelled words. This technology transformed my dyslexia into a minor inconvenience, rather than an insurmountable disability. I also hired an editor, who patiently helped me develop the awareness of grammar, sentence structure, and constructs to the point where, eventually, her work involved more proofreading than editing or rewriting.

The point of this story is that just because you think or have been told that you can’t do something all your life, does not mean it’s your truth. That is why the Quest process is so important and sometimes arduous, because you need to take the time to sift through all this STUFF so you can discover the hidden gems in your life—some of which have been buried by unsupportive family members and friends or incorrect assumptions on your part.

Here’s my challenge to you . . .

Use *The Quest For Purpose* process as an extended journey of establishing your self-awareness. This is not something that has a right-or-wrong or judgement attached to it, but rather provides steps to help with clarity, confirmation, and validation.

Your Quest is never complete, as we each refine and learn more about ourselves and others throughout our entire lifetime. Continual learning is one of the attractions of our life, since we never, ever actually “get there”—allowing us as humans the enjoyment of endless challenges, which is the opposite of hopelessness and states of depression.

We are designed to operate this way our entire life (being challenged and active), whether we are 20 or 80—the only difference is the time we have left on this planet to contribute.

Finally, all this self-awareness will not benefit you unless you bring corresponding actions. Like anything else, if you don't use it, you lose it. By exercising your knowledge, you have the opportunity to transform not only your own life, but also the lives of others around you.