



Ten Steps Towards a More Fulfilling Life

The journey towards a more fulfilling existence starts within you.

On the surface, Philip seemed to have a successful life and career as the CEO of a large, profitable firm. But Philip's inner world was in complete disarray. He felt like a hamster in a wheel, running aimlessly at an ever-increasing pace.

He described his life as a series of never-ending assignments, or when things got really bad, a straitjacket. It often felt like other people's needs were drowning out his own. His wife left him because he was never present – physically or emotionally. His children no longer lived at home and wanted little to do with him.

Philip was also in bad shape and suffered from insomnia, worrying about all the things that needed to be done. Sleep deprivation affected his decision-making capabilities. It felt like he was sleepwalking through a meaningless life.

He believed he had no hope left and longed for a new life.

The journey to a life well lived

Many of us can relate to Philip. At some point, we all feel tired or dissatisfied with our lives and yearn for change. In many of my conversations with senior leaders, there is a common desire to become the **best version of ourselves**. We seek to learn, grow and enjoy our life to the fullest.

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The only way to achieve this is to push ourselves beyond our current capabilities, beliefs and boundaries. We need to be proactive and take control of our lives by focusing on the things we can act on.

Without completely overhauling our lives, we can start with subtle changes to nudge us in the direction of the life we want. While there is no such thing as having a perfect life, we can begin to lead a more fulfilling one.

With this in mind, here are ten steps you can take towards a more fulfilling life.

1. Identify who you really are

To live an authentic life, you must first identify what it really means to be you. The key is to realise that everything you do in the outer world begins in your inner world. When you discover your purpose and what makes you feel most alive, you can make wise choices and changes.

2. Let go of unpleasant experiences

Often the only real obstacle in your path to a fulfilling life is your past. You need to work through all the hurt and disappointment and let go of any unpleasant experiences that are affecting your present behaviour. Understanding the things that

hold you back will enable you to move forward and make a conscious effort to act differently in the future.

3. Practice empathy and compassion

Everyone desires meaning, fulfilment and security, even if it is expressed in different ways. It is therefore important to get out of our narcissistic bubble and appreciate life from another person's point of view. One way to express **empathy and compassion** is through kind deeds. Kindness begets kindness and there is no better way to grow than to help others grow.

4. Take care of yourself first

It is difficult to live a full life when you are in poor health. **Self-care** involves looking after your mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health. When you are able to take good care of yourself, it is much easier to support and care for others.

5. Find meaning at work

As we spend a lot of our time at work, it is crucial to find a job that you feel passionate about and that best fits who you are. Feeling bored or unsatisfied at work is a sign that change is needed. If you can determine the root of your unhappiness, you will know what action needs to be taken so you can spend your time and energy on work you enjoy.

6. Be selective about your relationships

Humans are social beings, hardwired for connection. However, you need to be selective about these connections. Let go of draining relationships with negative, dishonest or overly critical people, as well as people who don't respect you or prevent you from growing. At the end of the day, you want to spend time with people who energise and encourage you.

7. Never stop learning

Life is a process of continuous learning – the moment you stop learning, you are dead. There is always something new to discover; you just need to get out of your comfort zone and embrace the unknown.

8. Seek help and guidance from professionals

Coaches or psychotherapists can guide you on this journey. These professionals can help you become mindful of your patterns of behaviour. They will challenge your fears, unlock your potential and guide you to experience feelings of personal worth, purpose, and richness in living.

9. Give generously to others

A life directed chiefly towards the fulfilment of personal desires will only lead to bitter disappointment. True fulfilment entails taking responsibility for the happiness of others by contributing to improving the world.

Generosity also has beneficial side effects, both mentally and physiologically. Giving to others increases your self-esteem, improves your happiness, and has also been proven to **lower your blood pressure and help you live a longer life**.

10. Practice gratitude

Finally, to lead a fulfilling life, acknowledge the good that you already have in your life. The benefits of expressing gratitude include improved relationships, physical and emotional health, sleeping habits, mental stamina, energy, and overall happiness. Being grateful is one of the simplest and most powerful things you can do.

In a nutshell, an effective way to begin living more authentically is to **envision the life you want** and identify the elements that energise you and make you happy. While happiness is not the goal, but a by-product of a life well lived, you can still build happy memories with lasting impact.

Ask yourself three questions: Who are you? What do you stand for? And who would you like to be? If you can visualise this person, try to be this person. If you can pinpoint what you love to do, spend more time doing these things. And if you know who you love, make an effort to love them.

Instead of fixating on status, wealth or material possessions, think about your personal legacy. Consider what you would like people to remember and say about you when you are gone. By answering this question, we gain perspective on the value of our lives and what is most important. While you are still living, focus on becoming that version of yourself. It is never too late to begin authoring a truly meaningful life.

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Leaders; Down the Rabbit Hole of Leadership: Leadership Pathology of Everyday Life; Riding the Leadership Rollercoaster: An Observer's Guide and Leading Wisely: Becoming a Reflective Leader in Turbulent Times.

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