Introduction

The answer to career and life quandaries is simple, really. We only need to know the WHAT that we want. The HOW and WHY aren’t necessary—in fact, they can be obstacles to action.

Mike McManus
Founder of the Source Experience

Thank you for taking the first step in investing in the most important asset you have: you! I first want to state that your Quest for Purpose is a continual journey until the day you die. It is not something you will ever “reach,” like a goal (though goals contribute to your purpose); rather, it is an active-tense experience through which you are unceasingly engaged in the realization of your purpose. This quest is not to be a burden or a performance measure, but rather a state of being and doing, aligned with your calling, through which you find life to be fulfilling, rewarding, and personally purposeful.

But sadly, most of us will not acknowledge, realize, or claim our life purpose. There are numerous studies to support this position, including the Gallup global workplace study (142 countries), which shows workforce engagement at less than 13%. That means, at best, 87% of the population dislike what they do, from “mildly irritated” to “loathe.”

I live near Vancouver, British Columbia (Canada)—consistently ranked as one of the top five most attractive and livable cities in the world. Yet, a recent life satisfaction survey across Canada identified Vancouver residents as having the lowest level of life satisfaction in the country. Why the disconnect—could one reason be a lack of purpose?

We live in a time of unceasing information and choices. The reality is that all these options can overwhelm someone who has not taken the time to clarify their life purpose. At this moment, there are 40,000+ job descriptions, and growing every day, in the U.S. alone. Some of the jobs that some of you will have, or will do, have not even been invented yet.

What could be some of the reasons that so many individuals are not living their life On Purpose?

• Society’s “microwave” and ADHD expectations could be part of the problem—if people can’t figure it out in a 5-minute assessment or 10-minute conversation, then they will abandon the purpose process because of their impatience.

• Maybe it’s the narcissistic mindset, demanding instant gratification, which is in conflict with the deep, mindful, thoughtful, and reflective process of determining and confirming life purpose of contribution and giving—not self-centeredness.

• Perhaps it involves misguided priorities, where we will spend more time, money, and energy on entertainment in one weekend than in developing ourselves or discovering
our purpose. One of my students said he would never spend $50 on an assessment to help get clearer on who he was, yet he headed out that very night and dropped over $50 on a movie, drinks, and food. Our priorities are reflected in our actions. The developed world’s dysfunctional obsession with consumerism falsely suggests that fulfillment comes from that next great purchase or acquisition; sadly, that “consumerism high” quickly fades.

- Some individuals are overwhelmed by the question of living On Purpose and have no idea where to begin or start, so they acquiesce to a life of indifference, admitting failure and quitting before they even start.
- Some are misguided by well-meaning relatives, friends, and colleagues who discount the concept of purpose or dreams, so they relent under peer pressure from others who, in many cases, are not clear about their own life purpose, either.

I had the privilege of having dinner with Richard N. Bolles (author of the bestselling book *What Color Is Your Parachute?*) and Richard Knowdell, a veteran in the career development industry. Between the two of them, they have 80+ years’ experience in the career development and life purpose arena. So I asked them why—with so many resources, books, and programs available for career and life direction—are there so many people unclear about their life direction and purpose? In unison, they answered, “People are not willing to do the work!”

Could another reason that we are unclear about our life purpose is that we are simply lazy?

It takes effort to confirm our purpose, and with the advent of mobile media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.), perhaps it is easier to be a mindless observer and a “fan” of life, rather than a participant and player. The unfortunate fact is many of you reading this line (in the introduction, no less) will probably not finish this book. Distractions abound, and it requires discipline to focus on what is really important.

However, I want to deeply encourage those of you who will take the steps and engage your “Quest for Purpose and life clarification process”—it is worth it! It is the difference between merely existing and living a bright, alive life. It is not that those with purpose have any fewer challenges (in many cases, they have more), but that they are deeply connected to their interests, gifts, talents, and calling, which daily inspire them to take action; at the same time, living their purpose fulfills them.

*The Quest For Purpose* was written for those of you who want to realize your potential in all areas of your life, so that you might be able to contribute at the highest level, which is where the greatest amount of personal and spiritual fulfillment is realized. This is an expanded book from my previous version, *My Source Experience Journal*, because you—the reader and participant—wanted more information, directions, and processes to help you achieve your own Quest for Purpose.

I thank you for the honor to contribute to your journey confirming and clarifying your life purpose; after all, my own purpose.
Before I get you started on your Quest exercises and journal, it is important that you have a belief system that is congruent with the Quest process. To help you understand what we believe in terms of principles, truth, strategies, and even myths, I have outlined them in this chapter. Use this information as a reference as you complete the Quest process to ensure you are aligned with what our experience has taught us works best to achieving a life lived On Purpose. These strategies and beliefs form the framework for successfully implementing your Quest.

**The Myth of Motivation**

The pursuit of our interests requires no motivation because we enjoy doing them. Interests compel us; to compel means to be pulled or attracted. That precludes any need for motivation. We require motivation only for things that do not interest us. If we need motivation, we must question why we do it. The reality is that nobody can motivate you or anybody else. Taking action or not taking action is a decision by an individual—you.

As an author, I might be able to encourage and inspire you, and provide you a roadmap, but you still have to take the Action Steps yourself. If you are constantly needing to motivate yourself to take action—and when you do it, it is with great burden and emotional pain—then you need to question whether you are moving in the direction of your purpose.

There will always be some things in life that we must do that we don’t enjoy (for me, my yearend taxes)—these must be done, regardless of our purpose. However, the point here is that if we need to motivate ourselves every day to engage in our activities, there are some deeper questions that need to be addressed.

*Interests and passions are not burdens; they energize us.*

**Change of Form—Not Content**

Our interests may change their form and shape throughout our life, but their substance does not change. Interests nourish us and help us survive difficult times. We are empowered by our interests—whatever form they may take.

Not too long ago, someone asked me, “Ken, what would you be doing if you were not in the professional development field?” My answer: “Nothing else.” Rarely do we do have an “about turn” in our purpose. This fact gives us confidence that we can build our life in a direction that won’t suddenly evaporate or change course; however, that is not to say that we don’t have multiple directions and options within our purpose.
I started out as a sales trainer in this industry but my work quickly expanded to include leadership, purpose, talent management, wellness, performance management, and personality, to name a few. Though my topics expanded, my interest and purpose regarding helping others live a life On Purpose did not change. In the beginning of my career, the majority of my work involved speaking and training; now, I do much more writing. The theme “helping others” is still the same, but it has evolved into my service as an author as well as speaker on such topics—hence this book, *The Quest For Purpose!*

**Special Note:** We acknowledge that, in some cases, individuals have traumatic events in their lives that change their ability to do what they enjoy doing—such as workplace accidents and injuries. Purpose and passions can have many different layers, so in these situations, individuals can embrace something that is a secondary interest. For example, recently, I attended our local airshow. During one of the performances, we learned that the pilot was a paraplegic. He had injured himself during a hang-gliding accident, but so loved flying that he figure out a way to fly, regardless of his unfortunate disability.

**Clues**

There are innumerable clues to your purpose. They are everywhere. Learn to recognize them. They all radiate a common quality—they make you feel fulfilled inside. It could be an experience with a person, a place, or a project. It could be a feeling you receive through your senses. Whatever it is or who is involved, nourishment comes back to you. You light up and feel a sense of well-being. You need to learn to follow your clues. I will outline several activities through which you will document these clues to assist you in identifying your true purpose and calling.

One of the number-one trends in coaching today is teaching individuals the skill of mindfulness. The busyness of life and all the distractions can lead us to avoid paying attention.

*Learn to be quiet and reflective so you can be in touch with your deepest feelings and thoughts to catch the clues rather than being clueless.*
The Myth of Mutual Exclusiveness

This is the question: Can we have it all? The answer is Yes. We must learn to reject the concept that to have one thing, we must give up another.

**Myth example:** To be successful at work means no family life or health. On the contrary, having it all is a natural consequence of embracing a balanced lifestyle. Truly fulfilled individuals find ways to have it all. But remember that “having it all” is defined by each of us independently—not by others.

True balance, by definition, is, in fact, “having it all.” But since you define what having it all means, what that looks like or how it should be manifested in your life will be unique to you. As outlined in the Values chapter, we must make values-based decisions, rather than situation-based decisions. Once you know what you want in all the areas of your life, then you can prioritize your life to reflect those activities and actions aligned with your purpose and calling.

*Don’t let anyone tell you that if you chose one thing, it means you must abandon something else.*

An Idea Precedes Money

Money never precedes an idea or action; it always follows. The idea of “Give me the money and I’ll get this done” is a myth. If we become organized around our ideas, money and resources will become attracted to them. One of the unfortunate trends in our society is narcissism and an entitlement complex. Sorry, but that’s not how life works.

I was conducting an unscheduled performance review with one of my client’s employees. The reason cited was very poor performance, and she was on the verge of being fired. This employee was lazy, unproductive, and difficult to deal with—drama was always attached to anything she was asked to do. Her reason for her poor performance was that she deserved a raise and was working to “rule.” At first, I thought she was joking, but she was serious.

If you ever want to be successful, please never have a dysfunctional mindset like this employee.

*Keep reminding yourself of the order of things. Effort, work, and investment always precede success.*
Beware of Negative Gurus

I mentioned this in the Mindset chapter—to be aware of “negative gurus,” which are well-meaning relatives, friends, and associates who impede the flow of our creativity by using negative terms and telling us how impractical or stupid our ideas are.

Sure, go ahead and get wise counsel, but if you are going to realize your full potential, you will have to shut out (or shut up) those who might try to thwart your efforts and calling. Your purpose journey is not always popular or supported by the people around you, so please guard your mind and heart.

Don’t Cop Out on Your Hang-ups and Excuses

We all have our hang-ups (issues) and we will have them, to some degree, for the rest of our lives. Rather than putting off what you really want to do, do it now—in spite of your “stuff.” Deal with your issues as you go along. In our holistic development model, we mention that emotional anchors both positively and negatively influence our personality, perspectives, responses, and, ultimately, our actions. We never want to use what has happened to us in the past as an excuse to not do what we are called to do in the present or future. “On Purpose” individuals don’t have pity parties, and neither should we.

If you have such “stuff,” then please do yourself and others a favor and deal with it. Take the steps, get the help, or just let it go. To help you, there are many great resources available online, so take the initiative and just do it!

Career Myth—Your Life and Work

Even though I talk about “Your Ideal Career,” career as an absolute is a myth. You can get a job, but a job is limited and usually ends at some point. A career is better defined as a lifestyle that fulfills you while providing you with the resources you require. When your income-producing activity is synchronized with a gratifying lifestyle, there is no “Thank God It’s Friday” followed by “Blue Monday.” Work is shifting from defined jobs or careers to expertise. Rather than a career, you should describe your expertise that meets the needs of a project, employer, or client.

We don’t have a separate work life and home life—we simply have a life. It is integrated. All the moving parts work together like a live orchestra to produce enjoyable music, just as all the moving parts in your life do. All of our life elements become fulfilling and enjoyable.
Being Responsible

Quest is a responsible way to lead your life because you are being accountable to yourself, your needs, your interests, your calling, and your passions. Therefore, you are in the best place to help others and to contribute to your community. You will be operating from a position of strength; you will have a wealth of resources to share with others. Your energy and engagement will inspire others to take action while fulfilling you at the same time. This seems like a win-win to me!

*Keep the Quest strategies and concepts close to your heart while you embark on a new way of thinking, doing, and being. That will make it easier for you to break old habits and construct new Quest habits.*
Your Positive Review

The first principle of ethical power is Purpose! By purpose, we mean your objective or intention—something to which you are always striving. Purpose is something bigger. It is the picture you have of yourself—the kind of person you want to be—the kind of life you want to lead.

Kenneth Blanchard & Norman Vincent Peale

This is your self-assessment of all areas of your life—past, present, and anticipated future. You will focus only on the positives. No neutral or negative experiences should appear anywhere in this Positive Review.

Instructions on completing your Positive Review:

• In this exercise, you are creating the autobiography of your past, present, and anticipated future, but remember—you are documenting only positive experiences—nothing negative or neutral.

• Think back to the earliest age you can recall, then reconstruct and journal each year of your life from that point. Maybe at age five, it was that trip to Disneyland or a friend’s birthday party.

• Assess your present life and look ahead to your future possibilities.

• List only your abilities that match your interests. If you are interested in something but feel inept in that area, please list it. If you are very good at something but hate doing it or it does not interest you at all, then leave it out. If you are unsure because the environment was not positive, then maybe note that for future consideration.

• Review your photos, videos, files, letters, communications, reports, school assignments, clippings, school annuals, etc.—anything that helps you recall the various occurrences in your life.
  
  o Why did you enjoy these times and those people, places, things, etc.?
  o You are paying close attention to the specific elements of these events or experiences that contributed to your positive experience.
  o Example: When I did my Positive Review, I listed most of my 4-H trips and conferences. What was it about these experiences that I found so positive? I journaled items like traveling to new places, meeting new people, traveling with a group, a sense of adventure and something new, and a feeling of accomplishment, since all these trips were won. One of those trips included speaking to an audience of 400 in the Royal York Hotel in downtown Toronto when I was 16. I recall being nervous, but also
very excited and energized. That is when I knew I was called to communicate and encourage others. At that moment, becoming a speaker was not a question of if but when.

On the following pages, list your interests, inspirations, attractions, fascinations, intrigues, and natural curiosities in the following life areas of your life. I have segmented this into eight specific categories. I have found that by doing it this way, it is much easier to respond to the questions rather than more generic question, “What do you enjoy in your life?”—which is far too broad for helping people confirm their purpose. There are no right or wrong responses—only your responses.

**Special Note:** As you begin to journal your thoughts, you will more than likely have crossover among the eight different Positive Review categories—this is normal, even expected. Example: Under **Senses**, you list a trip into the mountains and you appreciated the smell of the fresh mountain air and the sound of a raging waterfall. Under **Places**, you list the same trip, because you loved the energy and the majesty of the mountains. Repeating this narrative is part of the clarity process as you break down the various elements that interest, encourage, and inspire you.

- **a. Senses:** Smells, tastes, touches, sounds, sights
- **b. People:** Who? Why do they interest you or attract you?
- **c. Places:** Where? (geographic)
- **d. Intellectual:** Ideas, inventions, concepts
- **e. Experiences**
- **f. Belonging:** Memberships, associations, groups, clubs
- **g. Learning:** Formal and informal education
- **h. Work:** Paid or unpaid (volunteer); itemize tasks

**Remember:** It is important that you disregard any neutrals or negatives that come to mind. Include only positives.
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The Quest For Purpose

The Roadmap for the Engaged, Intentional Employee

- Purpose Discovery
- Self-Awareness Mastery
- Leadership, Communications, and Wellness

Moving individuals, teams, and organizations from a state of complacency to a place of engagement requires a better understanding of their strengths, gifts, talents and Personal Style differences. When we do the discovery work, we reap the rewards through real workforce interaction, involvement and improved ROI.

Ken Keis, Ph.D., is a foremost global authority on behavioral assessment strategies and processes, and an expert in leadership, purpose, and wellness. He has authored over 4 million words of content, including 500 articles, 4 books, and a dozen assessments to help others realize their full potential.

President and CEO of Consulting Resource Group International (CRG), Dr. Keis has worked with many high-profile companies, associations, and industry groups. In the past 28 years, Ken has conducted more than 3,000 presentations and 10,000 hours of coaching and consulting. He is a highly sought-after author, speaker, trainer, radio host, and TV and media guest. His books, Why Aren’t You More Like Me?, Deliberate Leadership, and The Quest For Purpose, are available on Amazon.com.

Ken is available to speak to:
Corporate, Government, (HR, Training, Consulting, Coaching and Career Development Organizations/Professionals), Education, Association and Industry Groups, Businesses, and Direct Marketing Organizations

Speaking topics include:

The Quest For Purpose: A Self-Discovery Roadmap To Find It And Live It is a roadmap for holistic self-development to discover what you truly value, to learn about meaning before purpose, to understand mindset and character traits, and to determine how to make the right decisions, every time.

Why Aren’t You More Like Me? The Secrets to Understanding Self and Others. Understand Your Natural Preferences and Others’ Differences and learn how to play to your strengths, how to stop feeling offended, and how to act intentionally.

Deliberate Leadership: Learn about the implications and impact of your Leadership Style. Recognize the importance of influence and how to intentionally build credibility and rapport. Inspire yourself and others, and learn the three mandatory leadership skills.

Dying to Live: Vibrant Living Strategies for Improved Health and Wellness. What is your health worth? Your wellness is in your hands! Learn simple yet powerful stress reduction strategies. This topic will address and challenge mainstream recommendations and help participants understand that we are each responsible for our own well-being.

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www.kenkeis.com • 604-852-0566
What people are saying:

“Ken, your consulting services, coaching expertise and ability to communicate effectively exceeded my expectations. Thank you very much for being the lead consultant for our national business process redesign project. Like the VP of Chrysler stated on tape, this was the best work he has ever seen, to help us move forward.”

Steve J. Landry, National Manager
Chrysler

“We want to thank you, Ken, for the recent leadership development session help with my management team. The session accomplished my primary objectives in a very professional and non-threatening fashion. I highly recommend your process for all organizations, particularly ones trying to move to a more effective team approach.”

Fred Townley-McKay, CEO
Southwest Credit Union

“Ken is one of the best trainers in leadership development and assessments out there. His CRG certification program is an outstanding value for money, even if all you get out of it is your own self-development, let alone the people you serve in your field. As a teacher and speaker who has taught around the world, I give Ken 5 out of 5 stars for communication, interactive teaching, and just being an incredible persuader!”

Jonathan Michael, Senior Level Birkman Coach
Adjunct Instructor Trinity Western University

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THE QUEST FOR PURPOSE

Gallup research confirmed that nearly 90% of employees are indifferent or actively disengaged at work. Less than 10% of the population believes that they are living a fulfilling life *On Purpose*!

**Start Living Your Life *On Purpose* Now!**

These are disturbing statistics. That means that there is a 9 out 10 chance that you are like one of these unfulfilled individuals—would you like to change that? *The Quest For Purpose* is a roadmap for assisting individuals to live a life full of meaning, significance, and purpose.

**Some of what you will gain:**
- Why meaning comes before purpose
- The mindset required to succeed
- *On Purpose* character traits
- What you really value
- Why playing to your strengths is essential
- How to make the right decisions in your life—every time
- Learn what excites and interests you
- Your Master Life Purpose
- Your core passions
- A clear vision in all areas of your life
- An action plan
- How to live your life *On Purpose* forever

*Imagine . . . Living and Experiencing a Life of Purpose, Passion, and Power. You can and will if you engage the contents of The Quest for Purpose.*

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The Quest For Purpose Assessment Packages

Take your Quest experience to the next level with these Quest Assessment Packages. As outlined in “Part Two: Assess for Success,” assessments are an essential part of your Quest journey. Please note: these packages are for online assessments only.

**Quest Personal Assessment Package**
Get the Personal Style Indicator (PSI), Values Preference Indicator (VPI), Stress Indicator and Health Planner (SIHP), and Self-Worth Inventory (SWI).
$97

**Quest Assessment Package Plus**
Add the Entrepreneurial Style and Success Indicator (ESSI) to this package if operating your own enterprise (small or large) is part of your purpose.
$127

**Quest Educational Assessment Package**
For students 15 and older, we recommend that you also complete the Learning Style Indicator (LSI) to confirm your own unique learning style.
$107

**Special Annual High-Volume Educational Assessment Package**
If you are a private or public K-12 school, university, college, or government educational ministry, please contact CRG to learn more about CRG’s educational discount for our assessments to kick-start The Quest For Purpose process.