

## Meetup Lesson 6: The PURE way to the good life

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### Objectives: Participants will learn:

- (1) How to use and interpret the PURE Test
- (2) Where PURE fits in the overall blueprint for the good life,
- (3) Why the PURE principles are essential.

### Introduction

We have just completed half of the course. Here is a brief review of what we have covered and where we are going for the remaining 5 lessons.

We will use building a house as a metaphor for building a rewarding future.

- **The roof** – The need for an overarching philosophy of life or worldview. Propose that the meaning-mindset is preferable to the happiness-mindset in making life better for self and society.
- **The foundation** – Viktor Frankl's 3 basic tenets of logotherapy and his 3 basic values of meaning: creative, experiential and attitudinal
- **The building blocks** – Wong's 8 sources of meaning: Positive emotions, achievement, relationships, intimacy, religion/spirituality, acceptance, self-transcendence, fairness/justice.
- **The furniture & internal decoration** – Meaningful moments from active engagement, relational interactions, observation, self-reflection, and meditation.
- **The structure or framing** – The PURE principle which stands for purpose, understanding, responsibility and enjoyment/evaluation. The next four lectures will focus on these four elements. The present lecture provides an overview of the importance of PURE.

### PURE as a Definition of Meaning in Life

Meaning in life can be operationally defined in terms of PURE as measured by the PURE Test (See Lesson 6 Exercise on [www.inpm.org](http://www.inpm.org)).

#### Purpose

Life purpose is important in clarifying our life directions and core values, organizing our activities and deliberating our daily plans. It is also related to setting long-term and short-term goals.

We often face competing demands in life or conflicting values in making decisions. Having a clear sense of purpose enables us to make good decisions in setting priorities and resolving dilemmas

Most importantly, living on purpose means that we live a fulfilling life in pursuing our calling and mission in life with passion and commitment.

## **Understanding**

Basically, understanding involves full awareness of the situation and the consequences of one's action. It also includes know right from wrong and understanding legal/ethical principles in decision making.

It is important to know ourselves and understand our place in the larger scheme of things. Self-knowledge of our strengths and weaknesses reduces self-deception. All kinds of tools are available for self-assessment regarding our strengths, interests, and personality traits.

Understanding also includes knowing the world in which we live and the culture within which we operate. Most people see the world through their own lens without having the courage to confront reality.

Finally, understanding involves achieving a sense of coherence in the midst of uncertainties, chaos, and absurdities. We have to make some sense of life, even if we have to create myths.

## **Responsibility**

Responsibility and freedom go together. Responsibility has moral implications. To be a responsible person is to be a moral agent. Doing the right thing is the surest way to feel good about ourselves.

If we do not take full responsibility for our own life, who will? If we are not willing to assume responsibility for our own decisions and actions, how can we develop a sense of self-efficacy? If we don't hold ourselves accountable for what we do, how can others trust us?

Having a sense of social responsibility prevents the excesses of egotistic pursuit of personal happiness and success.

## **Enjoyment/Evaluation**

The natural outcome of leading a purposeful and responsible life according to your best understanding and highest values is joy, but it by no means definite, because there are circumstances where our purpose and understanding are less than perfect and our ability to carry out our responsibilities are often hampered by internal and external constraints. Furthermore, the personal cost of acting responsibly may be very high.

The best part of adopting the PURE way to the good life is that we will not achieve happiness at the expense of others and we can develop full potential without harming others. The PURE way will lead to the life that is good in every sense, emotionally, intellectually, relationally, and morally.

However, if we still do not experience happiness after practicing PURE, we may need to re-exam our life purpose, understanding, and actions in order to do some fine-tuning. The PURE way is basically a process of self-regulation that requires honest self-reflection and courageous action.

## **The PURE Test**

The PURE test provides an operational definition of meaning in life. There are four questions related to each component. Although the four components are inter-related, their interdependence is only partial. For example, it is possible that we may

score high for Purpose, Understanding and Responsibility, but score low on enjoyment, because we sacrifice our own happiness for a higher purpose.

Interestingly, it is possible for score high on PERMA but low on PURE, and vice versa, because of the difference between the happiness-success mindset and the meaning-virtue mindset. As a case in point, some of the rioters in Toronto, Vancouver and London were having a great time looting stores and setting fire on buildings are having a great time because of the excitement, action, protesting against establishment, solidarity with other protesters, and feeling accomplished for out-maneuvering the police. The few heroes who try to stop the rioters risked their lives and got beaten up

### **Conclusion**

I have provided a framework for a meaning-centered positive psychology. The PURE way can be applied to many areas in our life, such as career, marriage and relationships. It can also be applied to clinical situations. The forthcoming Summer Institute will provide more instructions on how to apply the PURE principle and related skills.