

I'm Doug Weiss,

and I'm Alvean Lyons, and this is Love Life.

Alvean

So I get this question a lot about purpose, figuring out what we're here for. What are we supposed to be doing? You know, that I'm officially in my 40s now, and I can't tell you how many times I'm talking to an audience member, and they're trying to figure out, you know, how come I don't know, at this point in my life, what I'm supposed to be doing with my life, I look at everybody else they seem to know. So why don't I know? And and if I don't know yet, how do I go about figuring that out? What am I supposed to be doing with my career? What am I supposed to be doing here, period? And that's what we're going to talk about today. How do you find purpose? And, you know, is there some some wisdom about how to do it?

Doug

I'm glad you give me such easy topics to respond to.

So let me say a couple of things. First, I don't think finding your purpose, and this is one of the big existential questions that sooner or later, everyone asks themselves unless they are completely mindless-- I don't think there are too many people like that. But why am I here? What am I for? When I'm gone, What, what mark will I have made in the world? It's a perfectly reasonable question to ask, but it's not a question I think you can ask on the basis of one experience.

I think there are people, and we all have probably met one or more or believe that we know the someone famous who knew what they wanted to do with their lives and did it and were singularly committed to that one thing, and that was their purpose in life,

I'm not one of them. Let me say that my purpose in life has been many things. And I want to say to people that looking for your singular purpose, I think is probably not the right exploration in which to engage. You have a purpose as a husband or wife, as a brother or sister, as a son or daughter. You have a purpose as a friend, you have a purpose in your work, you may have a purpose in every avenue of your life. It's not a case of this one obsessive thing to which I am committed for most people. The second thing that I want to say is that I don't think you can find your purpose. At least most of us don't find our purpose. I think our purpose finds us.

I've changed careers, I've lost count of how many times, which is a nice way of saying i can't seem to hold down a job. What's driven me is largely curiosity, and, the ease with which I get bored. Those are not necessarily good traits. But each and every time I've explored something new and learned and started another part of chapter in my career, I could have said, that's my purpose. But that's not fair. No, the only thread I can pull through all of that is to say that in each and every one of the things I turned my attention to, I found that what I enjoyed the most,

and what I was best at was synthesizing, finding the right people and the right purpose, and putting them together to do the best thing that we knew how to do.

That for me, I would submit is probably my purpose. If I turn this around. And I said, did God have a plan for me to put this on an external and spiritual plane? Does God have a plan for my life? Yes. But like my old saying about crystal balls, we were all born with one, they just left out the instructions. God has not revealed that plan to me. And maybe I will find out in retrospect, what that plan was. But here I am, a work in progress. And, you know, my purpose is, frankly, to be the best that I can be whatever that is. And I don't mean that in a kind of Pollyannaish, trite way, but just to get up every morning and try to do the best job at the things that have been given to me to do. Try to do what I can do to offer to the people in my life, the best part of me. I fall short all the time. But my purpose is to try to do that. So when we encounter people who are struggling with that question, what's my reason for being, well, I would say to them, your reason for being is something you will never discover in your life. It can only be seen by the effect that you have in the world, to use the analogy, the ripple in the pond, that's the purpose of your life. All those ripples that reached all the people in your life, all the things that you touched, that were in some small or large measure, transformed by their interaction with you, that's your purpose.

Alvean

I like that, I like that a lot. I mean, I would say, for me, personally, the one thing that I know unequivocally is that the ribbon that runs through all that I have done over the years has always been relationship based. Always, my social capital, my concept of human capital, my concept of value, all of it is connected to relationships. And I cannot imagine my life without that. I know that I was designed to serve people, I know that I would not be happy if I were sitting behind a computer punching buttons every day, figuring out how this is coded. And that is connected. And I was not designed to do that. But I live, breathe, eat, sleep, love, building relationships with people and simultaneously helping them to become whatever is the best version of themselves they want to be. And that thing brings me such joy. And much like you, we share very much in common. The fact that that has taken on countless evolutions for me, you know, I can tell you that I've gone into many jobs, not thinking that I would be able to necessarily do that thing, only to discover that it was the best opportunity for me to do that thing. And, even better, yet, I never thought I could do that thing with the people that I ended up doing it with. And it ended up being the richest experience that I have ever had. And I realized that life is as you were referencing is not about us, it is so much about those we do life with. And it's not about what life has given us. But what we give to life. And the richest version of ourselves is often experienced in the giving away and not in the receiving. I have loved and continue to love and will always the minute I say to you that I don't feel like doing people or relationships Take me to the doctor to check and see how much time I have left, something has gone terribly wrong. That's not to say that I don't like my quiet time, my downtime. I'm not saying that. But when I don't want it. When I don't want to do relationships anymore. Something is amiss for me. And I would I would even venture to say that something probably is skewed spiritually for me. If my life suddenly stops being about others, and it starts being just about me, something went wrong spiritually. So I get people trying to make sense of who they are and what they're

designed to do. But often I think they're measuring by the wrong Litmus test. They're looking at in this social media rich world that trades what's real for what's a virtual. They're looking at snapshots of people's lives that appear to be something. That is the equivalent of me listening to one sentence in your entire conversation and trying to decide everything that you're thinking. You can't make a decision based on that you can't look at, what appears to be, and assume that it is much of what we're measuring ourselves by than the numbers, the fame, the numbers of love, the numbers of likes, the amount of money in our bank account, most of those things are going to matter very little, if not completely, not at all at the time of our death. And if we were to live our lives backwards, thinking about what we want said about us, when we die in order to make sure that nobody has to lie at our funeral, we would change the way that we live today. So that the decisions I'm making now, the relationships that I'm building, the way in which I serve the things I invest my time in equal the eulogy that I would be proud of, to say that I could hear my own that for me, is how you figure out what your purposes What do you want to be said about you and then live so that that will be true,

Doug

Absolutely. And I want to add that I hope no one took from my earlier comments, the thought that it's not appropriate or important to have ambitions, goals, by all means. If there are things that you care about deeply, or things that you just are excited about the possibility of experiencing, go for it. You'll hear this every year at some college graduation. Some speaker will stand up and say something like follow your passions. Well, I don't know about anybody else. But you know, I'm trying to remember back to my college graduation. And thank goodness I didn't.

I don't think I had a particularly good idea of what my passions were. I kind of had a lot of ideas of things that interested me, but I wasn't somebody that was possessed by a singular vision of what I wanted for my life. You know, I discovered that as I went on, and I rediscovered it many times things that were at that point in my life, my ambitions, but to suggest that it's so blindingly simple. Why didn't I think of that? Just follow your passion? Well, you know, I think that's just bad advice. Frankly, follow your curiosity, follow your interest, explore things, be willing to fail at them, find out that they're not right for you. But whatever you do, you mustn't think of your life as a once and done... that's a closed chapter. Okay that didn't work or it did and let's just keep doing it. Be willing to change and adapt as you move through your life and have new experiences and find new things that are of interest or curiosity for you. Stop worrying so much about whether those things are your purpose, worry about how you live your life and how you interact with people and whether those interactions are leaving something with the people in your life that's valuable. If you do those things I think you're going to have an interesting and textured life. I think you're gonna find that you won't be asking yourself very often what's my purpose

Well the is another episode of love life. We thank our producer Kamaria and our recording engineer Todd, and if you'd like to be in touch with us about this show or any other you have thought about its [doug@lovelife.digital](mailto:doug@lovelife.digital) or [alvean@lovelife.digital](mailto:alvean@lovelife.digital).

Most of all, we want to say thank you to you, our loyal listeners who come back every week and allow us to be part of your lives you give us purpose indeed, maybe that's our purpose.

And if it is, it's a good thing and we'll be back next week with purpose to talk to you

until then. Have a great week, folks.