Living Your Legacy

Description

Ever wonder why we are here? I have long been fascinated with those who find â??their calling or passionâ?• early in life. Many of us do things, try things, and get through our day. We are students, workers, volunteers, family members and more. We do stuff. We do stuff we have to and sometimes we get to do stuff we want to, like vacation.

Inevitably, there comes a time some of us wonder, â??Whatâ??s my purpose in life?â?• Years ago, I was asked to interview with a publication, â??Profiles in Success.â?• The process was well thought out and executed by the people who run it. The interviewer had done hundreds of these interviews and had an annual formal dinner celebration highlighting chosen individuals as the most compelling successes. It was an honor to be asked to be interviewed.

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I took the interview and was presented with the raw document for comments and revisions. Then a funny thing happened. I couldnâ??t bring myself to open it, not at first glance or even fifth glance. I was reminded by the interviewerâ??s wonderful assistant to please review and respond to them, as soon as possible. It was Spring and I was â??busyâ?•. *(Side note: when someone says they are or were â??busyâ?• thatâ??s a euphemism for the fact they are choosing not to make something a priority.)*

A few months rolled by and although I knew I needed to open the document and get it back with my comments, something kept me from opening it. I donâ??t know how to explain it. (Maybe deep down inside I knew I would be disappointed somehow and that kept me from opening it? Iâ??m sure my therapist might have a comment here.)

When I finally read it, I was underwhelmed. I didnâ??t like my story.

It was â??fineâ?• but not what I wanted to be known for. I had held roles, and done my jobs well but what had I truly affected? If I had to write my story, would it have been this? If I were to have met an untimely demise, would I be happy in the review of my life to that point? I felt flat, without dimension, no curves or edges. It was a wake-up call.

Upon review of things, I knew I needed to retract the article. I mustered up the courage to call my interviewer, someone who had dimension, created something great, celebrated others, journeyed into himself, and came out fuller for the experience. How would he take what I was about to say? Egad, here goesâ?¦â?¦

Clearing my throat, â??I apologize in advance for this request. I want to retract my Profile in Success.â?•

â??What? Why?â?•

â??Well, it turns out Iâ??ve not done what I need to do to meet my definition of success. Iâ??m not even sure I know what my definition is, at present. Thereâ??s a bit of imposter syndrome happening

with me right now. I am sure my current lifeâ??s story is not what I believe to be congruent with what I have come to know your publication for.â?•

â??So where do we go from here?â?•

â??Retract. And, if I could ask a favor, which I realize Iâ??m in no position to do, may we redo this when the time is right?â?•

â??I think you are overthinking this and being a bit hard on yourself.â?•

â??Perhaps, but it feels right. If there is one thing that I learned in this process it is that I have more, and Iâ??m moving closer to being in integrity with myself.â?•

â??You know, youâ??re the first interviewee to retract their story.â?•

â??I feel awful that Iâ??ve wasted your time.â?•

â??Not at all, Iâ??m curious to see what comes of this. When the time is right, call me.â?•

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Deep breath. For the first time, since getting the email, I felt air come into my lungs. And just as I was able to breathe again, I felt a baby elephant loaded onto my shoulders. Now what?

My pursuit of self-integrity and defining what success means for me has been a journey like no other. Itâ??s been seven years since that interview with Profiles in Success, and Iâ??ve lived a few lives and almost met an untimely demise. *(A surprise bout of congestive heart failure be damned. Another story/public service announcement at another time.)*

My interviewer and I have kept in touch. Iâ??ve been working diligently on things. A thought kept at the forefront of my mind, â??Live your legacy.â?• Where does one start when thinking about the idea of living their legacy?

I started with the end in mind.

- How would I like to be remembered?
- What would it take to live in a way that leads down that path?
- Who would I surround myself with?
- What would I choose to do daily?
- Where would I apply my talents and skills?
- Who will I be helping?
- How will I feel in the process?
- Why is living this way important to me?

Unfortunately, answers to these questions did not come overnight. In my rumination, I remembered someone telling me that when you are unsure of yourself, help someone else. So, I did just that, I decided to go back to my college alma mater and serve. I hadnâ??t been back in over 20 years. I was â??busy.â?•

When I started to serve, I didnâ??t know what I was doing but it got me engaged. In that engagement, I learned, asked questions, and thought of solutions. I wasnâ??t being paid. I was paying them. Colleges love time, talent, and treasure. Since I couldnâ??t give the â??big treasureâ?•, most universities are seeking, I gave the next best thing in my time and talents. Turns out, that was worth something to many, including me.

I found myself surrounded by curious learners â?? students. They wanted mentoring. I had experience and loved the share of questions, fears, doubts, ideas, and dreams. There was a connection. In that connection, there was a new level of energy and enthusiasm. I was serving my younger self for I too had been in their shoes. Iâ??ve been on the precipice of many major changes and life transitions. I know what it feels like to be unsure yet full of excitement and pure dread. I managed through. I can give my time and wisdom through my experiences to provide others with insights that may be helpful. Ironically, I too was gaining in the process. Mentees were providing me with a new way of thinking. This bright generation, who grew up with computers, are fast and know more than I ever did. The exchanges have been nothing short of wonderful. The more they came, the more I couldnâ??t keep up. I was being asked to guest lecture and more students wanted mentoring. I created a program leveraging my network to manage the increased demand for student mentorship. We had ramped up well and all parties were happier for being a part of mentorship and the program I created. And just like that, COVID hit. Clarity came during this time. Answers to the questions, I considered after retracting my story from Profiles in Success, started to come easier. I put things into motion for my next company.

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Today, Iâ??m living my legacy. Itâ??s been three years since I registered TERN Mentoring, my newest entrepreneurial venture. We are now the first mentorship-focused digital platform for universities connecting students, alumni, and corporate professionals. Our vision is to be the mentorship connection in much the same way that mega connectors Uber and Airbnb have become the mainstay connections for their customers. I surround myself with enthusiastic and engaged people. Living my legacy has created a way for others to live their legacy too. And although since deciding to start a new business, that elephant remains on my shoulders, and has gotten a bit heavier. I donâ??t mind carrying it. There is purpose in doing so and that has made all the difference.

Iâ??m getting closer to going back and asking for a redo of Profiles in Success but even if that doesnâ??t happen, Iâ??m more aligned with being in integrity with myself. There is less fight in my day and more flow. This is what it means to live your legacy.

Interested in joining the mentorship movement, as a mentor, or connecting us with your company/university? Reach out to us at info@ternmentoring.com or check us out at http://www.ternmentoring.com.

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Tina Fox
Tina is an experienced, award-winning, â??from the ground up,â?• corporate executive (20+ years) turned entrepreneur (8+ years) specializing in business development and bringing excellence to each space.

Finding success in sales as early as the 6th grade, when she won her first sales contest, and after graduating from James Madison University with honors in communications, Tina pursued a career in business development. Her pursuit of excellence in achievement allowed her to compete and win in a male-dominated space, setting the stage for mentoring women in business. Years later, she would create a group, which she merged with Women on Course (2019), to support the professional development of women.

Category

1. Members
2. Uncategorized

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