



Meaningful Minute



New Meaning



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Powerful Events – Rich Meanings

The meanings of your future are tied directly to the meanings of your past.

This is the first in a series of eight connected Meaningful Minutes that you can choose to experiment with to create your own model for finding and shaping personal meaning within your life.

It is entirely your choice whether you start to find and shape personal meaning as an art, a science or a mix of both. Either way, explore each exercise, giving it time and patience. Work by engaging all your senses, thoughts and feelings. And remember, as Viktor Frankl once said, “The meanings of a moment are not always instantly recognisable. Sometimes it is necessary to be truly a ‘patient’ and wait until the meanings manifest themselves.”

Your life is a rich tapestry full of endeavour, commitment and challenge. In the same way that the future of an unfinished tapestry is tied to its past, your future is tied to the meanings you choose to find in the threads of your past experiences. These meanings are your connection with events, encounters and experiences you have both chosen to face, and had presented to you. You have a certain amount of freedom to choose your events or encounters, and yet this freedom is finite. You (and we) are not free to choose every encounter, you are not free from some conditions of life. Yet in learning how to find and shape meanings, you can come to know that no matter what condition you face, you remain free to choose the shape of your response.

As you engage with the series of exercises, keep the following thoughts top of mind:

- More than at any other time in history, you have the means to survive; but what are you surviving for?
- Every human being is a Leonardo da Vinci. The only problem is that he/she doesn't know it. His/her parents didn't know it, and they didn't treat him/her like a Leonardo. Therefore, he/she didn't become a Leonardo. **Oystein Skalleberg**

To be human means to have the capacity and responsibility of creating values.

Arthur C Wirth



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Identifying Powerful Life Events

The objective of this exercise is to identify the most-memorable events or encounters you have experienced in your life thus far. Try and recall experiences that remain poignant in your mind or memory; or encounters that you perceive had the most impact on you and within your life.

There are a number of ways you can undertake this exercise. Two possible methods are listed below:

- **On your own** – sitting quietly with pen and paper and reflecting on your life to-date and writing down those events you see, feel or hear in your mind. You may want to use the Significant Life-Events Questionnaire on the following page to help guide your thinking and feeling.
- **With a friend** – who you trust and can have an open and honest dialogue with. Spend 30 minutes remembering significant or powerful events in your life and then ask your friend for their input on which events they felt you were most connected with or impacted by. What is important is their gut feel based on your body language and tone of voice.

Some people find it useful to draw the event on paper, using symbols to help them re-create the event and explore its impact or significance. Others like to be in motion when they reflect, as it helps them to reflect and consider. The number of events is not important. When you have your list, refer back to it over the next few weeks, and in readiness for the next exercise.

Please remember, the very next step you take into your future will be tied in some way to the events and experiences of your past. If you work through the exercises that follow this one, you will gain a greater sense of clarity about 'why' you choose the steps you do.



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Finding My Significant Life Events

Review your events in light of the statements below and place a tick mark next to those events where you agree with the statement. Don't worry if some of the statements don't seem relevant to any of your events, or if others are relevant to all your events. Use these questions as a guide to help your reflection.

- I would most hate to go through this particular event again
- I would try and avoid the event in the future if at all possible
- It would give me great joy and pleasure to experience the event again
- The event highlighted my true strengths and character
- The event highlighted my weaknesses and vulnerability
- I saw the event as a direct threat to my self-esteem
- I saw the event as a wonderful opportunity to further myself
- The event made me feel very sad and confused
- The event made me feel very happy and I wanted it to last for ever
- The event made me feel pity for the other person
- The event was a major learning point in my life
- The event was a low point in my life and made me feel negative
- The event really questioned what I held as valuable in life
- The event reflected my selfishness and my focus on 'me first'
- The event really reflected the positive contribution I can make to others
- The event helped me to realise what was important in my life
- The event gave me a sense of purpose, energy and vitality
- The event really put me to the test and stretched me
- The event took me way beyond my comfort zone
- The event creates powerful feelings within me to this day.