



# Pause With Purpose

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...to refresh

...to grow

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## Are You Different?

Remember those days when the last thing we wanted to be was "different"? Elementary school ... high school ... even beyond. We wanted to fit in and be accepted by our peers. We dressed the same, talked the same, even acted the same. Being an individual was difficult, lonely, scary business.

Being different from the norm of society today is still difficult, scary business. As much as we speak positively of being an individual and walking our own path, it is much more of a challenge to actually live it out.

Consider, for example, where we fit in today with the prevailing attitudes, values, and behavior of our culture. To what extent do our values and behavior reflect that of the society we live in?

Perhaps, though, I get ahead of myself. Before we can compare our values to those of our society, we must first be clear about what we hold dear, what guides our decisions and behavior, what shines out as distinct characteristics of the person we are. It takes some focused effort to identify and label what, up to this point, we may have only felt. But doing so helps us better see the heart and soul of who we really are.

Likewise, it is helpful to be clear

about the values and attitudes of the culture we live in, since our culture has a subtle though powerful way of seducing us into conformity with its standards.

Consider these messages frequently promoted in the North American culture.

- People of value are those who are wealthy, intelligent, powerful, popular, beautiful, and influential. Each characteristic adds exponentially to their perceived importance.

- We are # 1, the center of our own universe. We must be driven and aggressive, showing no weakness as we doggedly pursue what benefits us. It is important to get our "fair share", and if we can get more than that, all the better!

- The gathering of material goods enhances life and creates security. The more we possess, the better off we are. Contentment and happiness depend on obtaining the latest new possession to add to our storehouse.

While this is but a taste of our North American cultural values, it does give a flavor of what is often promoted, both subtly and blatantly. The question is - how closely does this reflect what we individually believe and value? Have we studied and actively embraced our culture's values

as an accurate representation of our own? Or have we followed the herd and passively absorbed the given cultural values? Or do we stand out as something truly "different"?

One person who embodied the reality of "differentness" was Mother Theresa, servant to the slum dwellers in Calcutta, India. While wrestling throughout her life to more fully understand spiritual truth, she lived her life holding fast to values quite different from those we noted earlier. Hers was a life distinguished by love and caring for those of little social value. She lived to serve those who had nothing to give in return. Rather than promoting herself, she chose to follow her calling to care for and live among "the least of these". She was, indeed, "different"! Yet, she carries a message for all of us. ***It's okay to be different!***

In fact, if being true to our deepest convictions, beliefs, and values makes us stand out, then being "different" is an honorable gift we can bless our self with. Working to live in alignment with our values may cost us - financially, socially, career-wise. But living any other way becomes an insult to our soul ... and to the One who created it.



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## CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to design, enact, and maintain healthy life change.

You can contact me at:

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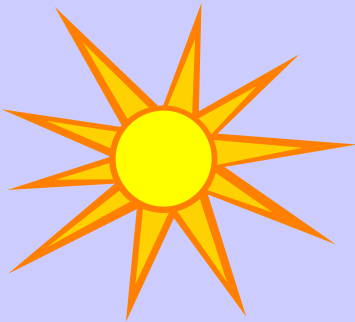
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## What Does Your Life Say?

It's very easy to get caught up in the daily rush of life, accomplishing what needs to be done day after day. We seldom give our self the luxury to pause, step back, and look at our self.

Yet, without looking, there is no knowing; and without knowing, there is no blueprint to guide and adjust our behavior.

So, for a few seconds, let's take a peek at our self.

- What do our decisions and interactions with others tell others about what is important to us?
- How well do our actions and words reflect our stated values?
- What kind of person can we respect being, and how close are we to being that person right now?
- Who do we want our children and grandchildren to remember us as?

Let's be that person today!



**"Don't let the voice of others overshadow the song of your soul."**

**-Turning Point**