

Lesson 4- Writing Your Purpose Statement

Hello,

Okay, so today is the BIG day where you're going to hold in your hand a purpose statement that's clear, stirs your heart, and perhaps most importantly, actionable. Warning this email is long, but I think you find it valuable.

If you've been following the exercises then this will be a snap. If not, no worries. Back up and hit the early lesson for a few minutes to identify your RECIPIENT, ROLE, AND RESULTS. Why? Your unique purpose is the sweet spot where those three elements overlap...literally.

MY GO TO PURPOSE STATEMENT FORMULA

In order to write a purpose statement that includes all three elements use this very simple rubric:

I believe God created me to help _____ (recipient) _____, by
_____ (role) _____, so that
_____ (result) _____.

I can almost hear two discordant thoughts going off in your head right now. One is "You've got to be kidding me it can't be that simple and formulaic." But I am telling you writing your purpose statement is truly that straight forward. Hundreds of people have used this formula to find a clear actionable direction for their life.

GOD'S PURPOSE STATEMENT

I'll go out on a limb here and even assert that God's purpose statement looks like this. Don't believe me. How about this:

For God so loved the world (recipient) that he gave his only begotten son (role) so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (result).

PERSONAL EXAMPLES

Let me show you some examples from my own purpose work. Here are some of my core component notes, a concise statement, and then one of my actual longer statements written during my 90 day review of life goals (FYI-I revise my purpose statement every 90 days.)

- **RECIPIENT:** I am concerned about people who are missing out on the beauty of life. People who are burdened by stress and directionless and perhaps not even realizing it. I am also concerned for Christians who want to be closer to God, but aren't sure what they should do to grow in their faith.
- **ROLE:** Computer skills, Writing, Speaking, Video, Lots of special "how-to" knowledge around: bible study, prayer, and faithful application. Teaching. Creating resources.
- **RESULT:** People going into their day with a clear sense of who they are and what they want to accomplish – I envision a woman waking up alert, ready, and enthusiastic about going into her day. I can see her settling into a chair with a piping hot cup of coffee in the morning for a few minutes of quiet time with God. She reads, prays, journals, sets a godly intention for the day. She goes through the day tackling a number of to-do's. She's given herself permission to just do what she can realistically do and she doesn't easily get side tracked into other people's expectations. She goes to bed feeling great about her day. Ready to rest well. She takes a few minutes at the end of the day to give an honest review of what she's done well and an improvement she can work on. She loves her life and is honoring God with her gifts.

CONDENSED PURPOSE STATEMENT: *I believe God created me to help worn out Christians who are spiritually hungry by offering them practical tips, tools and strategies,*

so that they can have a deeper connection with Him and fully live into the abundant joy he desires for them by becoming the best version of themselves.

Do you see the recipient, role and result in this statement? Your statement doesn't have to be this tightly constructed. In fact, I expect it won't be. One of my earliest statements for a youth group I led was: *"I'm going to love these kids, in a way that some day they will know God loved them."* And frankly that was as powerful of a guiding statement I have ever written.

MYTH BUSTER MOMENT

Okay, so I said I can imagine two thoughts are rumbling around in your head immediately. Here's the other thought -- "But I have a bunch of recipients and a bunch of gifts. So I can list a bunch of purpose statements using this rubric."

Here's what you need to realize - The angst your feeling about focusing down to one things is driven by a myth. The myth is this...Your purpose is suppose to be this big, flashy, single purpose mission. We are driven to believe that because of a bunch of archetypal hero stories we've been exposed to where the main character is struggling in life. They get confronted with a tremendous challenge that only they can do something about. Then through great sacrifice they achieve that ONE thing and everyone lives happily ever after. That's a fantasy.

That mythology gets reinforced by rare examples of people like Mother Theresa or Ghandi whose life is focused around a single clear epic mission.

THE BOWIE KNIFE MINDSET

I call this the "Bowie Knife" mindset. That metaphor comes from my days of teaching wilderness skills and seeing person after person who wanted to have a great big, flashy Bowie knife that in the end was limitedly functional. God didn't make most of us as Bowie knives. Most of us are more like Swiss Army knives or just your good old fashioned three blade pocket knives. And that's totally okay.

Here's **two reasons you should give yourself a break** and let go of that angst above and beyond the fact that it's based on a myth.

First, as long as you are **doing something in that SWEET SPOT where you passion, gifts, and worthwhile result overlap, YOU CAN'T GO WRONG**. You will be being faithful with your gifts for a good result. You'll be striving for what you believe God desires. How could you go wrong. .

The other reason you need to relax is **your purpose isn't a stagnant one time endeavor**. You can and should revise it from time to time. No matter how perfect your purpose fits now, the opportunities and needs around you are going to shift and flow. Your gifts are going to grow. And, you're going to need to rethink your purpose.

Don't get me wrong...there will be what I call meta-themes of purpose that seldom change for you. For example, I cannot imagine that I will ever be in a season of life where God won't be using me to teach people practical tools. That focus has stuck with me all my life so far and likely will continue.

I hope this relieves enough of your angst (if you had any). to dive in and write your purpose statement. Trust this process. The formula is tried and true.

So here's what you need to do today:

TODAY'S EXERCISE

ACTION STEP #1 Connect with what matter most to you before writing.

Complete and review identifying your RECIPIENT, ROLE, and RESULT. Sit with those insights for a few minutes before you begin to write. Consider which needs tug at your heart most, which gifts you would most like to use, and what your greatest hopes are. This is necessary pump priming for writing your statement.

ACTION STEP #2 Pray for God's guidance and then write using the rubric:

I believe God created me to help _____(recipient)_____,
by _____(role)_____,
so that _____(result)_____.

PRO TIPS FOR WHEN YOU ARE WRITING

Having personally done this a bunch of times I would recommend that you:

1) Write quickly. I actually set a timer for 7 minutes when I do this. I turn the timer on and write as fast as I can for 7 minutes.

2) Don't battle the words: Throw down your thoughts in a stream of consciousness fashion. The think and reflect time is BEFORE you write. If you've done that work, the statement will flow. If you don't do the work, the result is often times a pretty statement that is reflective of expectations and 'should's' that you feel rather than reflective of your heart's deepest yearnings to meaningfully serve.

3) Let go of performance anxiety. No one is going to grade this. Feel free to resort to phrases and bullet points if your struggling with how to word something. This statement is for you.

Lastly, all of this equates to – **You don't need a perfect statement, you need a completed statement that reflects the truth of who you are.**

**ACTION STEP #3 Post your statement somewhere where you can see it
and read it aloud everyday for at least one week.**

You must position your purpose strongly in your conscious mind, for it to shape your daily choices and actions.

**ACTION STEP #4 Share your purpose statement with our private Facebook group,
IF you're comfortable with that.**

A purpose statement written from the deepest heart of who you are can feel like an extremely personal thing to share. So, I understand if you are hesitant to put it out there, but my experience in walking through this process with many people is that sharing your statement is incredibly empowering. Plus, I created the private Facebook as a safe place for us to share, ponder, encourage, and journey together.

You can see my newly revised purpose statement in the comments below the Facebook post.

God's richest blessings on you as you write your statement. Please have fun with this and post any questions you may have in the private Facebook group.

Peace,

John Arnold

PS: Okay, so what happens once you know your purpose? That's the subject of our fifth and final day.

PPS: Don't forget - Live Facebook today, 1 PM (CDT)