AJ Schwabe

Living a Life of Significance

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Defining a Life of Significance

A life of significance is often defined as a way to live that will provide fulfillment and the betterment of others around you. This can be done in a number of ways through sports and activities, academics, or the everyday steps to become a functioning citizen. This includes being helpful to others as well as challenging them to become better. It includes thinking before you act, taking chances, and using the opportunities you have been provided to make a satisfying life.

You hear these sayings like “fortune and love favor the brave” but the best one is “You can not swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore” (William Faulkner). I think this quote greatly symbolizes the triumph we experience when we approach our goals head on. If you worry too much about what could go wrong you will never find a way for things to go right. A key part to living a life of significance is taking chances. Without the ability to take chances you lack a means to your goal. You need to find a way to step out of your comfort zone and risk something to achieve meaning. Whether that be your sleep, money, or even pride you need to be conscious that you won’t get things for free. When opportunity strikes you must be swift, persistent, and willing to lose it all in order to seek out your ambitions. This can be seen within some of the most successful people in the world.

Kobe Bryant is a professional basketball icon who revolutionized the game. Beyond that however, he raised a family, maintained life long friendships, and founded the Mamba sports foundation which is a nonprofit organization that helps improve the lives of youth athletics. Kobe has accomplished so many amazing things but in order to do so he gave up many hours of sleep, late nights spent out partying, and unhealthy foods that could hinder his basketball career. He made this sacrifice because he found his meaning for a life of significance in his athletics and his family.

Bill Gates is another famous person who risked it all. Gates dropped out of Harvard University to pursue his company Microsoft which turned into a technology corporation over the years. He risked his college education and potential unemployment because he worked hard and believed in his product. Gates eventually found love, started a family, and initiated the Gates Foundation to which he has donated an estimated 39 billion dollars to help those in need across the United States. He found his life of significance by becoming financially stable enough to help others who couldn’t take risks. He has helped the sick by funding vaccines for Covid-19, measles, and polio as well as the homeless by donating millions of dollars to housing and services. Overall, Bill Gates has saved millions of lives because he chased a life of significance towards helping the less fortunate and providing the goods and services used to advance the human population.

A life of significance doesn’t always need to meet the criteria of helping others through monetary funds. It can also include giving back to the community by increasing academic prowess, morale, or providing entertainment. Film producers, song writers, and comedians provide great examples of entertainment while scientists and mathematicians give us the knowledge to prosper. A balance of influence on both sides can aid you in finding your meaning of a life of significance. However, an unbalance of either side is proven to be unhealthy and even fatal.

Robin Williams is a legendary standup comedian and voice actor. He is known around the world for his roles in Mrs. Doubtfire, Jumanji, and Aladdin. Robin Williams was a star that illuminated entertainment but never truly had a life of significance. Williams battled with depression for the majority of his life but instead of taking time to help himself he pushed through it. He eventually committed suicide with an autopsy report that revealed Lewy body disease. Williams was never able to live a life of significance because he had an imbalance that kept him from dealing with his mental health.

Mental and emotional health can be a big factor of living a life of significance. You can cloud your judgment if you are not mentally healthy enough to make decisions. It might affect your satisfaction level for completing something you might hold to a high standard. It can affect your physical health as well. You can have trouble sleeping, focusing, or even thinking because your brain is in a fog. It is important to prioritize yourself as much as your goals because if you don’t it will harm your relationships and overall well being.

On the other hand, over prioritizing yourself has consequences as well. Some argue that living a life of significance means doing what makes you happy and well off but they neglect to see the repercussions of their actions. If people in political power were to make decisions based on their own person gain the world as a whole would be an awful place. People would tend to distrust one another as the world falls into chaos. Very few people would end up living a life of true significance because they would be too busy worrying about themselves. Being accountable for your actions and being empathetic towards others is a large part of living a life of significance.

A quest for knowledge is found in every person that achieves a life of significance. Whether that be knowledge in the form of a skill like fishing or concept like theoretical physics, a life of significance is not complete without it. We consider many geniuses to have lived lives of significance because they followed a passion that was able to provoke and inspire others. That can be in the form of strategy games like chess or designing compound formulas in mathematics. Passion may be the foundation for every project but knowledge acts as the map to guide you to your final destination.

There have been many famous thinkers throughout history but one that stands out is Stephen Hawking. Hawking, despite being diagnosed with ALS, lived a life of significance as a theoretical physicist and cosmologist. He inspired the youth and created many theories about the start of the universe as well as the creation of black holes. He was able to form bonds with other mathematicians that would help him theorize and communicate with others.

A life of significance is one of the most argued over topics due to its lack of definite answer and how heavily sought after it is. Such a life is hard to achieve but with confidence, humility, and persistence anyone can have it. You need to form a goal and actively take steps to achieve it. You need to seize every opportunity and work to improve yourself as well as others. Above all, you need to remain yourself and don’t conform to others based on society's standard for a good life. With these attributes anyone can live a true life of significance.