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Living a Life of Significance

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If you asked a hundred people what living a life of significance is you would receive a hundred different answers. This paper could be thousands of pages long if it was written about all the unique ways to live a life of significance. However, living a life of significance can be best defined in three ways: being true to oneself, having a strong work ethic, and by positively impacting others.

The first step in living a life of significance is being true to oneself, which means you are firm in your beliefs and values above anything else. There is no greater example of this than Simone Biles. Simone grew up in foster care and then became wildly successful in the United States gymnastics program. She has won a record seven gold medals in the Olympics and was named the best female athlete in the world in 2017. However, she controversially quit before the Tokyo Olympics because of her strong values. Being true to oneself overtook everything for her and she explained her struggles with mental health and suffering from the sexual abuse from Larry Nassar. Simone decided to be true to oneself over everything else, a very difficult decision at the time, but one she is very proud she made. She put her values above all. Her life will always be viewed as incredibly successful, because of the medals that she won. Nonetheless, people should respect her more for her ability to stand up for what she believed with seemingly the whole world in opposition. Simone was quoted saying, "But I was not going to let him take something I've worked for since I was 6 years old. I wasn't going to let him take that joy away

from me. So I pushed past that for as long as my mind and my body would let me” (Felix). She did not conform to the oppressive views of others, instead she called authority figures out for their horrendous crimes that had been covered up for years. Some could claim that being true to oneself is not always the right decision. For example, Saying Simone Biles should have competed in the Tokyo Olympics because she represents the entire United States. I would attest that statement and say Simone was brave enough to know that enough was enough; sparing herself from the mental battles that she was fighting.

So many people struggle to find their role in life. However, there is one thing that will let you succeed no matter what you are doing: a strong work ethic. It is true that every professional athlete is extremely talented, but that talent is not alone. Every single one of them has spent countless hours by themselves working, when no one else is watching. Perhaps the greatest athlete of all time, Michael Jordan, said that “obstacles don't have to stop you if you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it. Go through it, or work around it” (Frederick). He is saying that having a strong work ethic is the key to being successful and living a life of significance. A strong work ethic is not just important for sports or athletics but all aspects of life. Being able to put your head down and go to work is such an underrated ability. People will always remember and celebrate championship games or overtime wins, but what they really should be remembered is everything that it took to get to that point. So much more goes into a season than just the championship game. People such as Walt Disney and Steve Jobs are thought so highly of because they built their incredible dreams into reality. Steve Jobs started developing computers in his garage. Walt Disney is the son of a farmer from Marceline, Missouri. They are perfect examples of ordinary people who had good ideas, but more importantly had an incredible work ethic to carry out those ideas. Walt Disney famously said,

“The difference between winning and losing is often not quitting” (Hutrya). Walt had been fired from multiple jobs, told he had no talent drawing: two things that can completely destroy a person's confidence. However Walt decided to keep pushing, fighting, clawing, doing whatever it took to make their dreams come true. Steve Jobs says, “Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking” (Russel). It is so important for people to love what they do in life, because why would anyone care about a job that does not bring them any happiness or satisfaction. Critics would say that a life of significance does not have to be full of hard work and some people just have natural God-given talent. I would counter that argument with, if you do not work hard on something then does it truly feel like you have accomplished anything.

The final and most important factor of living a life of significance is positively impacting others. Our lives mean absolutely nothing if we do not help the people around us. Not everyone has to donate half their salary to charity, but little things such as holding a door, smiling at someone walking past you, or having a conversation with the person riding on the same elevator with you can make such a difference in people's lives. Being a good parent is the best way to live a life of significance. Abuse or neglect can kill a child's mental health and have lasting impacts on them. Fathers should spend as much time as possible with their kids, taking them places and experiencing different things with them. Mothers should be happy staying at home with their kids instead of hiring babysitters. Being a good parent or role model is a critical and essential way to positively impact someone's life. Behavioral Therapist, James Lehman said, “Your kids watch you for a living. It's their job; it's what they do. That is why it's so important to try your best to be a good role model” (Lehman). Society as a whole needs more good parents.

Volunteering is another great way to positively impact others. The UnitedHealth group conducted a survey and the results were astonishing. 96 percent of people who volunteered over the last 12 months said volunteering enriches their sense of purpose (Kimberly and Keady. Volunteering should be a normal part of our lives and not something required by institutions or teams. So many people have the ability to help others but chose not to for a number of trivial reasons. One could make the argument that you can live a life of significance alone. I would argue that if you lived your entire life never impacting others then you were not actually living you were acting as a mindless entity. A life of significance is not determined by the amount of money one has accumulated or any other material goods but by the people we helped along the way.

We all should strive to live a life of significance. If the entire world did then it would be a much better place for everyone. Societally, we need to change how we judge success in life from wealth and fortune to if the person truly lived a life of significance.

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James lehman?