

LIVE YOUR  
LIFE'S PURPOSE

Also by the author

*The Purpose of Love*

# LIVE YOUR LIFE'S PURPOSE

A guidebook for creating and living a Purposeful Life

DOROTHY RATUSNY



**INSOMNIAC PRESS**

Copyright © 2008 by Dorothy Ratusny

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of the publisher or, in case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, a license from Access Copyright, 1 Yonge Street, Suite 1900, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5E 1E5.

**Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Ratusny, Dorothy

Live your life's purpose : a guidebook for creating and living a purposeful life / Dorothy Ratusny.

ISBN 978-1-897178-68-3

1. Self-actualization (Psychology). 2. Happiness. 3. Self-esteem.  
4. Consciousness. I. Title.

BF637.S4R382 2008                      158.1                      C2008-904294-8

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program.

Printed and bound in Canada

Insomniac Press  
192 Spadina Avenue, Suite 403  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5T 2C2  
[www.insomniacpress.com](http://www.insomniacpress.com)



For my mother,  
who taught me how to read and write before I was  
even old enough to attend school. Unknowingly, she  
gave me what have become two of my most treasured  
gifts. For this I am eternally grateful.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	9
Foreword	11
Introduction	13
Section One	
<b>One</b>	<b>Consciousness</b> <b>19</b>
	The Art of Conscious Awareness 21
	Present Moment Awareness 23
	Conscious Breathing 28
	Conscious Thinking 37
	Connecting Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviours 41
<b>Two</b>	<b>The Search for Self: The Inner Journey</b> <b>51</b>
	Self-Esteem 55
	Building Self-Worth and Self-Esteem 60
	Self-Evolution 72
Section Two	
<b>Three</b>	<b>Finding Meaning and Purpose</b> <b>77</b>
	The Art of Happiness 80
	Your Inner Wisdom 90
	Identifying Your Gifts 96

<b>Four</b>	<b>Your Life's Purpose</b>	<b>101</b>
	Discovering Your Life's Purpose	104
	Universal Purpose	108
<b>Five</b>	<b>Life Lessons</b>	<b>115</b>
	Inner Healing	126
Section Three		
<b>Six</b>	<b>From a Place of Spirit</b>	<b>133</b>
	Rejuvenating Your Spirit	136
	Without Ego	140
	Acceptance	142
	Compassion	146
	Forgiveness	148
	Your Dark Side	152
<b>Seven</b>	<b>Daily Life Practice</b>	<b>157</b>
	Intention	160
	Infinite Learning	168
	Commitment	172
	Selected Bibliography	177
	About the Author	179

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am truly grateful for the many gifts that I have been blessed with and for the ability to continually hone these gifts. I acknowledge that I have been given a very special life's purpose, which I make an effort to live consciously—and on a daily basis. Knowing my life's purpose allows me to be responsible to it, as I share who I am with others.

I first understood the meaning of destiny most clearly more than a decade ago when I met Ryan. His capacity for giving me unconditional love has made it possible for me to grow and evolve in incredible ways, both in spirit and as a human being. Knowing that we are together in one more lifetime gives me the strength to create infinite possibilities.

My parents and grandparents were monumental in developing my self-esteem. I was fortunate to grow up in a world where encouragement, praise, and love were effortlessly demonstrated. I am reminded daily in perfect ways of how incredibly important my early environment was.

To Catherine, I value the special bond that we share and our mutual commitment to reaching even greater depths of honesty and truth. She reminds me of how important it is to take life (and myself), a little less se-

riously at times. I am so grateful that we are together in this lifetime as sisters.

*Live Your Life's Purpose* was originally published in 2005 under the imprint of Orpheus Press. What you have in your hands is a “gently” revised version reflecting my study and work since that time, and the thoughtful eye of a remarkable editor who uses her innate gifts and talents each time she set eyes on a new manuscript.

I am forever indebted to Gillian Rodgerson, my editor, Graham Fidler, of Publishers Group Canada, and Mike O'Connor, publisher of Insomniac Press, for seeing the potential of my original work and for collectively bringing this revised edition to the world.

To all of my clients, past and present, I am privileged to hear your most intimate and significant life experiences, and to be witness to your remarkable journeys. It is through my work with you that I continue to learn, and remain humbled by your incredible courage to heal. It has been through my work with you that I have learned how to fully live my purpose. A heartfelt “thank you” to the many clients who allowed me to share their stories in the pages that follow.

## FOREWORD

From where I sit at my desk, I look out onto a beautiful freshwater lake. I watch as different species of birds fly among the trees. Several land effortlessly on the swaying branches of the nearby maples. And then moments later, they soar off again, their wings easily taking them where they want to go. The wonderful thing about these birds is that they live their purpose daily. In fact, they spend a significant amount of time flying—doing what they were created to do.

As human beings, we've made life far too complicated. We've evolved intellectually but at the expense of our instinctive abilities and our sacred connection with our inner self. It's as though we have forgotten how to enjoy each present moment of beauty and wonderment and instead spend much of the present reliving the past or contemplating the future. In those fleeting moments when our mind is quiet, we experience an unfamiliar and uncomfortable emptiness or void. And then just like that, we become consumed again with our thoughts. Thinking takes us easily out of the present moment and far away from our inner voice which intuitively has the answer. If we spend any amount of time with our self in silence, it becomes clear: beneath what we perceive as emptiness lies truth.

If we can learn how to listen, a whole new world opens to us. It is here, we discover that from quiet comes a sense of calm and inner peace that is indeed the opposite of empty. Rather, the inner quiet that we begin to experience is our spirit (our life force). Our intuitive wisdom waits to guide us as long as we dare to listen.

If you are awakening to the desire to become something *more*, then I encourage you to use this guidebook as an instrument to show you how to go within yourself for answers. Contemplate the ideas and experience the exercises as if you were following a road map—bringing you back to yourself.

Know that there is perfection in the purpose of your life and in the events that shape it. The moments of your life become far more personally meaningful when you identify your purpose. Reading this book, I hope that you will be inspired to think differently about yourself and your life. The consciousness that you will bring to each moment makes it possible to begin experiencing your own life differently, and to be compelled to live it in a way that honours your spirit.

## INTRODUCTION

We are living in a time of great spiritual awakening. Mankind has evolved from a creature with a basic need to hunt, gather, and procreate as a means of survival, to a higher consciousness with independent and contemplative thought. We live in a sophisticated world and yet one that concurrently reminds us of our humble origins. Sudanese tribes on the western bank of the Nile, living an uncomplicated existence, share the planet with the busiest urban centers of New York and Beijing. As residents of the economically developed world, we can travel to distant places and be reacquainted with our evolutionary and spiritual roots, or live our entire lifetimes wrapped in the illusions of material goods, power, and privilege.

What we choose is fundamentally based on our individual evolution. In order to consider the possibility of living our life's purpose, we need to reach a level of consciousness that goes beyond preoccupation with the day-to-day rudimentary activities of our lives. Personal growth begins with the discipline of heightened awareness of our self and the desire to evolve—to become “more.” With the insight and confidence that we gain from following a path that is influenced by spirit, we become inspired to build our lives around the pur-

poseful things that we are skilled at and most enjoy; we experience what it means to feel authentic happiness and we look for ways to use our gifts that positively contribute to the lives of others.

I wrote *Live Your Life's Purpose* with the intention of creating a guidebook—a manual for initiating greater self-awareness for the purpose of intentional evolution. The ideas that I speak of come out of my own study, training, and experience as a psychotherapist and from what I *live*. There is a great deal to be experienced the moment you commit to self-improvement and personal integrity. You will continue to be challenged by all that you seek to master, reminding you of the magnitude of each single moment as being critical for practicing truth, honesty, and love.

With greater consciousness comes the knowledge that your inner happiness is derived from feeling good about who you are on a core level. Inner happiness comes from sharing your authentic self with others, but in order to share authentically, you must know your inner self and feel good about who that self is.

Conscious awareness is the mechanism that allows you to look closely at all aspects of your self. As you do this, you begin to identify what it is that makes you happiest. From there, you can consciously begin to navigate your life toward what brings this happiness and sense of fulfillment. This is ***living authentically***. Consciousness presupposes that you will continue working on your inner self as you live authentically. In fact, it becomes far more difficult (and inwardly uncomfortable) to ignore your previous

way of being once you begin to see yourself as you really are. Living consciously means that you will continue to face the often daunting task of identifying what it is that you want to change or improve. To embrace the notion that there will always be work to do as you choose to evolve your inner self means that you can be more accepting of and patient with your progress.

Creating positive change is empowering. Seeing even small progress toward what you desire, it becomes easier to share your inner self with others. As you share your inner, authentic self, you will begin to feel inwardly validated. Feeling good about being honest with yourself and others about who you are, you will surround yourself with people who embrace and accept the positive changes you're making.

As you move toward a greater level of individual consciousness, you are more likely to recognize that you have a specific purpose. If you pay close attention, you will see the connection between what you are instinctively good at, what you enjoy, and what nourishes your inner self. Recognizing your life's purpose means you can be your authentic self all the time and share who you are and what you have to offer with others.

The first section of this book is designed to encourage you to explore your current self, to identify the aspects of your inner self that require attention, and to help you create change and feel a far greater sense of happiness and fulfillment. The second section focuses on discovering your life's purpose. It identifies the elements of inner wisdom and life lessons and the notion of your *gifts*—all of which serve to clarify and

shape your specific purpose in this world. The final section offers guiding principles for staying connected to your inner self and living your life's purpose each day.

Use a journal to record your responses to the exercises found throughout the book as well as to contemplate the ideas and insights that you gain.

# *Section One*



## CHAPTER ONE

# *Consciousness*

*Without consciousness, we cannot begin any journey. Consciousness precedes inner knowledge and inner knowledge precedes right, positive action.*



## THE ART OF CONSCIOUS AWARENESS

To be consciously aware requires you to be fully observant of yourself (your inner thoughts, feelings, and behaviors), others, and your surroundings. Conscious awareness is the direct path to self-honesty and truth. You see things *as they are* rather than convincing yourself of what you need them to be. Being conscious, you are aware of the anxiety that comes from thoughts of self-denial and avoidance. You may not like the feeling of anxiety, but your ability to be conscious allows you to observe your experience in that moment rather than ignore or repress what you feel. When you experience yourself honestly, you can choose to react with full awareness.

With conscious awareness of *what is* comes the ability to live authentically. Because you are choosing to observe situations and events in your life with honesty, you are no longer willing to justify your behaviour (or someone else's) in order to feel better. In fact, feeling remorseful for actions that don't necessarily reflect who you are or how you want to be helps you to make some honest choices for the future.

*To create any kind of change, you must be aware of how you are.*

Consciousness breeds positive change because it requires you to take a good look at yourself at times when you feel an uncomfortable emotion.

Drew's story is a clear example of this. Quick to anger, Drew said that he had neither patience nor tolerance for people who didn't take their job seriously. A supervisor of seasonal staff at a large amusement park, Drew explained that he would constantly find fault with his staff's behaviour. Drew's boss had suggested he seek my help because his boss was concerned that he was "micromanaging his staff in a critical and not constructive way." Drew admitted that he had deliberated for some time before calling me. He confessed that he didn't really understand why he needed to work with me.

As Drew began to talk, it was clear that he had very strong ideas about how his staff should treat park guests. When he saw a staff member behaving in a way that didn't meet his own high standard, Drew would immediately address the employee, but without awareness of the negative way in which he did so. While Drew's main focus was providing excellent customer service, his behaviour was largely perceived by staff and guests as overbearing and critical. Drew's first step before making any change was to become consciously aware of his self.

## PRESENT MOMENT AWARENESS

Your ***present moment awareness*** allows you to live consciously. When you are fully present, your attention is focused in that moment. For example, when you are folding laundry you are simply folding laundry. As you take your dog for a walk through the park you are simply walking. You are aware of your surroundings, using your senses to experience fully each moment, but that is all. Your focus remains in the present moment.

Being fully present makes you an observer. You observe your inner self (your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations) as well as all that is external to you. Being present allows you to be aware without being attached to or distracted by what is occurring in that moment. You observe the sky to be grey and overcast without wishing it were different. You do not become caught up in thoughts such as how miserable the weather has been this week or that you should have remembered to bring in the outdoor furniture cushions because now they will be ruined. Present moment awareness is observing *without judgment*.

Conscious awareness means you can recognize the difference between moments when you are simply *being*, and times when you are busy analyzing a particular situation, contemplating the future, or thinking of the past.

*Being conscious does not preclude thinking about past events or anticipating future moments. Rather, it allows you to recognize when you are in the present moment and when you are not: in the present moment, you simply fully experience everything in that moment.*

To practice present moment awareness, pay attention to what you're thinking, feeling, and doing in a particular moment. Recognize when you are *not* being fully aware, that is, when you are caught up in thoughts that take you out of the present. For most of us, being out of the present moment is far *more familiar* than being in it. Use your conscious awareness to help you return to the present.

Living in the present is a challenge because of our well-established attachment to what we have devised as chronological time. At least since the development of the ancient Egyptian calendar, which recorded 4236 BC as the earliest year in history, humankind has been preoccupied with measuring and recording the passage of time. For the most part, we eat, sleep, work, and play according to a specific, *time enforced* schedule. As the establishment of "standard time" is useful (and necessary) in the practical aspects of life,

*Recognize the importance of repeatedly bringing yourself back to the present in order to experience your life as a series of moments.*

How much of your life is spent living in either past or future moments? How often do you go to work thinking about what you need to do that day, or what you have planned for later that evening rather than experiencing present moment awareness? As you travel to work, how much time do you spend being consciously aware of your surroundings and how you currently feel?

How often do you only partially listen as your kids talk about their day, your mind already thinking ahead to what you are going to prepare for dinner or the fact that you forgot to put the garbage out that morning? Do you go to bed at night replaying the intriguing conversation you had earlier that day with your best friend or being fully present as your head touches the soft pillow and your muscles begin to relax, feeling your body fully supported by the mattress beneath? *In fact, we rarely allow ourselves to be fully present in each moment.*

Living the majority of our lives outside of the present moment feels effortless largely because we have become so skilled at allowing our thinking brain—our analytical self—to take over. We literally live *in our heads* as opposed to being fully conscious of our self and our surroundings. We have learned how to react rather than observe. We feel compelled to be “productive” by *doing* rather than *being* still and quiet.

In truth, we actually experience little of our lifetime as it is happening.

In a world where multi-tasking and time-tracking are considered acceptable and necessary ways of being,

living in the present has become the anomaly. Whether you're cracking eggs into a sauté pan or moving your body into a specific posture during a yoga class, it is when you make an effort to pay attention to what you are doing in each moment that you experience the moment fully. These become *your* moments.

While it can be helpful (and is certainly necessary) at times, to think about the past (to review, assess, understand), or the future (to plan, organize, and visualize), in the present moment you are simply experiencing. In the present, there is no worry or anxiety about the future (remember—the future hasn't happened yet!) and there is neither guilt nor regret based on past events. In the present moment, you are simply *being*. You exist. The next time that you feel an uncomfortable emotion, the impulse to react with anger or aggression, or feelings of annoyance or frustration, observe what happens when you move yourself back into the present. Rather than become caught up in “the story” that you have convinced yourself is true, notice how you feel when you pull your attention back into the present.