FINDING YOUR PURPOSE
GET PREPARED WITH UNILEVER
MODULE 1

LEVEL UP
by Unilever

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HOW TO FIND YOUR PURPOSE
IN THIS MODULE, WE’LL COVER:

WHAT PURPOSE IS AND WHY IT’S IMPORTANT

HOW PURPOSE IS LINKED TO LEADERSHIP

HOW TO BEGIN THE JOURNEY TO DISCOVERING YOUR PURPOSE
1. LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT PURPOSE.
READ THROUGH THE ARTICLE "FROM PURPOSE TO IMPACT" BEFORE YOU GET STARTED WITH THIS MODULE

What Is Purpose?
Most of us go to our graves with our music still inside us, unplayed. — Oliver Wendell Holmes

Your leadership purpose is who you are and what makes you distinctive. Whether you’re an entrepreneur at a startup or CEO of a Fortune500 company, a call center rep or developer, your purpose is your brand, what you’re driven to achieve, the magic trick it’s not what you do, it’s how you do your job and why—the strengths and passion, the table no matter where you’re seated. Although you may express your purpose ways in different contexts, it’s what everyone close to you recognizes as unique—miss most if you were gone.

When Kathi shared her purpose statement with her family and friends, the responsibility and overwhelming: “Yes! That’s you—all business, all the time!” in every context—captain of the army gymnastics team, as a math teacher at Wellesley College, writing in her family and friend’s she had always led from behind, a gifted catalyst for others’ success. Through this new lens, she was able to see herself more clearly. When Dolf van den Brink revealed his newly articulated purpose we easily recognized the “wuxia master” who had led his employees through the fighting and unrest in the Congo and was now ready to attack the challenges at head-on.

Nick Craig on How Dolf van den Brink Identified His Purpose

At its core, your leadership purpose your identity, the essence of who you are. Purpose is not a list of the ed.

Scott Snook on How to Develop a Purpose Statement that Resonates with You Alone

How Do you Find it?
To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else, means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; never stop fighting. — E.E. Cummings

Finding your leadership purpose is not easy. If it were, we’d all know exactly why we’re here and be living that purpose every minute of every day. As E.E. Cummings suggests, we are constantly bombarded by powerful messages (from parents, bosses, management gurus, advertisers, celebrities) about what we should be (smarter, stronger, richer) and about how to lead (empower others, lead from behind, be authentic, distribute power). To figure out who you are in such a world, let alone “be nobody but yourself,” is indeed hard work. However, our experience shows that when you have a clear sense of who you are, everything else follows naturally.

Some people will come to the purpose-to-impact journey with a natural bent toward introspection and reflection. Others will find the experience uncomfortable and anxiety-provoking. A few will just roll their eyes. We’ve worked with leaders of all stripes and can attest that even the most skeptical discover personal and professional value in the experience. At one multinational corporation, we worked with a senior lawyer who characterized himself as “the
**TASK 1:**

Mine your life story for common threads and major themes. The point is to identify your core, lifelong strengths, values, and passions—those pursuits that energize you and bring you joy.

Think about the following questions:

- What did you especially love doing when you were a child, before the world told you what you should or shouldn’t like or do? Describe a moment and how it made you feel.

- Think about two of your most challenging life experiences. How have they shaped you?

- What do you enjoy doing in your life now that helps you sing your song?
TASK 2:

Take a shot at crafting a clear, concise, and declarative statement of purpose. The words in your purpose statement must be yours. They must capture your essence and call you to action.

“My leadership purpose is ________________.”

Example 1: When we asked one manager about her childhood passions, she told us about growing up in rural Scotland and delighting in “discovery” missions. One day, she and a friend determined to find frogs and spent the whole day going from pond to pond, turning over every stone. Just before dark, she discovered a single frog and was triumphant. The purpose statement she later crafted—“Always find the frogs!”—is perfect for her current role as the senior VP of R&D for her company.

Example 2: Another executive used two “crucible” life experiences to craft her purpose. The first was personal: Years before, as a divorced young mother of two, she found herself homeless and begging on the street, but she used her wits to get back on her feet. The second was professional: During the economic crisis of 2008, she had to oversee her company’s retrenchment from Asia and was tasked with closing the flagship operation in the region. Despite the near hopeless job environment, she was able to help every one of her employees find another job before letting them go. After discussing these stories with her group, she shifted her purpose statement from “Continually and consistently develop and facilitate the growth and development of myself and others leading to great performance” to “With tenacity, create brilliance.”

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<th>PURPOSE STATEMENTS</th>
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<td><strong>FROM BAD</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead new markets departments to achieve exceptional business results</td>
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<td>Be a driver in the infrastructure business that allows each person to achieve their needed outcomes whilst also mastering the new drivers of our business as I balance my family and work demands</td>
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<td>Continually and consistently develop and facilitate the growth and development of myself and others leading to great performance</td>
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TASK 3:

Write an explanation of why that’s your purpose statement.

Research shows that understanding what motivates us dramatically increases our ability to achieve big goals.
Purpose with Impact

1. Start with a statement of leadership purpose rather than of a business or career goal.

2. Take a holistic view of professional and personal life rather than ignore the fact that you have a family or outside interests and commitments.

3. Incorporate meaningful, purpose-infused language to create a document that speaks to you, not just to any person in your job or role.

4. Envision long-term opportunities for living your purpose (three to five years out) and work backward from there (two years out, one year, six months, three months, 30 days) to set specific goals for achieving them.
FINAL TASK

Please visit the Harvard Business Review [click here] (mandatory reading for Module 1)

THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT DAYS IN YOUR LIFE ARE THE DAY YOU ARE BORN AND THE DAY YOU FIND OUT WHY.

—MARK TWAIN