

7 summits

Life Coaching



freedom • confidence • growth

7 Summits ... life coaching, business coaching, personal development

January 2011

Hello and greetings in 2011 which is no longer a new year,

A topic that is perhaps at the heart of the coaching process, and one that has intrigued me for as long as I can remember is that of Purpose. Why do I exist, what's the reason for my life. In my conversations with many of you I realise that there is no easy answer. So herewith are some of my latest ramblings about purpose and responsibility. I hope that they are of some use. I would love to get comments back of agreement or disagreement and additional thoughts or reading.

Peter Godwin's book 'Fear' exposes the near genocide that has been happening in Zimbabwe. One passage in particular caught my attention. He had just been interviewing survivors. Beaten, burned, raped; emotionally and physically tortured. " And for the first time, in trying to work out why I am here and whether it is constructive, doing what I'm doing, I find myself settling on a phrase that I have always avoided, a description that I find pretentious, but that now seems oddly apt – Bearing Witness. I am bearing witness to what is happening here – to the sustained cruelty of it all. I have a responsibility to try to amplify this suffering, this sacrifice, so that it will not have happened in vain."

I also recently read 'Left to Tell' written by a survivor of the Rwandan genocide. After 3 months of being in hiding she discovered that all of her family who were in the country, as well as numerous friends and acquaintances had been brutally murdered. She now works with the UN and has been greatly involved with helping others to heal and forgive. She too has found noble purpose in the experience of her life.

Both readings have got me thinking about life. As we search for this Purpose we are so often looking beyond ourselves to some radical revelation. A blinding flash of light; and certainly there are the Damascus Road experiences. Yet even in that situation Paul had already walked a road of preparation. I enjoyed Peter Godwin's element of fumbling about, doing something because of where he had been born, a love for that land, a passion for journalism, he had not gone in with a clear cut purpose. But there it was.

A conversation I had at the end of last year, sitting in acacia veldt splashed by gentle summer rain, caught my attention. My companion said "in life there are no signposts to direct our path, but we meet people along our journey and thus is our way influenced". The other day I met with a person whom I first met 5 years ago. At that time there was a sense that she had a "leading" role in my life. I imagined her being a mentor and in some ways felt quite disappointed when that never transpired, and she never gave me specific guidance. Yet as I drove away from our tea I realised that she did play a significant role in my direction: it was she who introduced me to someone who connected me to Life Coaching.

As I have worked with so many of you in the groping for purpose, and as I have experienced myself. It's already wired inside us. And I'm beginning to think too that it's often only visible afterwards. Mother Theresa's famous statement that she did not set out to be an icon of humanitarian selflessness. She just helped the one person in front of her.

Watching Avatar, and currently reading The Lord of the Rings. It's the same story. Purpose found amongst the bric a brac of daily life. Our unique wiring, experiences, place and time of birth, world events are what determine our legacy. One of my favourite stories is that of Queen Esther whose influence is still recognized in one of the Jewish festivals. "Born for such a time as this" said her uncle. Her physical beauty was her entry point to royal marriage. Her character, intelligence, nationality and associates the rest of the journey to saving the Jewish nation.

Ken Robinson writes of the Element, the point at which natural talent meets personal passion. He believes that we are all born with tremendous natural capacities, but we lose touch with them as we spend more time in the world. Too

many people don't know what they are really capable of achieving. He believes that we need to think differently about ourselves. Check out one of his amazing lectures on www.ted.com.

An essay written by Irene Claremont de Castillejo in the early 1970's starts out provokingly.

" Today the world's problems are too technical and too vast for ordinary individuals to feel they have the power to influence them. Our educational institutions still pay lip service to the importance of training our children to think and take responsibility. But once outside school or college we plunge them into a society where independent thought ceases to be an asset. The government employee (and more and more of us are working for the government) knows he can never take final responsibility. The last word rests with the bureaucracy. So most of us shrug our shoulders, turn our backs on the monstrous problems of our civilization, and enjoy life as best we can. Our sense of responsibility for the outer world has left us." She concludes with "Our bright shadows of dormant potentialities are obviously also needed both for ourselves and for the welfare of the whole".

We are in this place at this time of history. We have talents and enjoyments. We have walked our roads through joy and sorrow. Let us each take responsibility for exposing and using those talents in conjunction with our passions, for as we do that not only will life be sweeter but like Peter Godwin I believe we will live that greater purpose.

Keep well, keep searching, keep growing

Fiona

ps ... I really would love to hear your comments. Put them onto my [7 summits FaceBook](#) page if you like